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The 1st. and 2nd. numbers having attained such considerable dimensions and in view of the desirability of the new volume appearing in January 1925, it has been decided to issue the 3rd. and 4th. numbers in one. ☺ ☺

Sulla Disciplina

MARIA MONTESSORI.

Riflessioni e consigli.

Il problema nasce davanti alla maestra non pratica, ma piena di entusiasmo e di fiducia nell'attesa della disciplina „interiore" che dovrà nascere dalla piccola comunità. Essa ha compreso e crede che i bambini devono essere liberi nella scelta delle loro occupazioni — e non debbono mai venire interrotti nella loro „attività spontanea". Né insegnamenti, né minacce, né premi, né castighi sono permessi. Occorre che la maestra rimanga tacita e immobile, paziente nell'attesa. — E così fa. Ella si mette da un lato, pronta a reprimere la sua propria personalità, affinché sia dato spazio „allo spirito infantile" di espandersi liberamente. Ha messo a disposizione dei fanciulletti una quantità di materiale: forse tutto il materiale.

Ed ecco nascere un disordine che cresce col tempo e che può arrivare ad un grado spaventevole.

E' dunque falso il principio studiato?

Non è falso. Tra la premessa teorica ed il risultato manca l'esperienza pratica.

E' su questo che occorre alle principianti inesperte un aguida illuminative.

Analogamente succede ai giovani medici e a tutti quelli che, „preparati da idee" — da „principi" — si trovano soli, a faccia coi fenomeni della vita, più misteriosi dell'incognita che il matematico cerca nel suo problema.

Consideriamo che il fenomeno della disciplina interiore è un fatto al „quale si deve giungere"; non è un „fatto iniziale". Noi siamo le „guide" sulla „via della disciplina". La disciplina sorgerà solo quando il bambino avrà concentrato la sua attenzione sopra un oggetto che lo attrae, e che si presta non solo

ad un esercizio perfezionante — ma anche al controllo dell'errore. — E' in questi esercizi che si va formando quel meraviglioso „ordine" di tutta la individualità infantile, che rende i bambini calmi, radiosi di felicità, attivi, inconsci di se stessi e perciò noncuranti né di lodi, né di acquisti materiali. I piccoli conquistatori di se stessi e del mondo esterno, sono, veramente „l'uomo trionfante" che ci sorprenderà come una rivelazione sublime dell'anima divina che è in noi. Il bel compito della maestra è di indicare la via verso la perfezione, di offrirne i mezzi e poi di togliere gli ostacoli, cominciando da se stessa, che può diventare l'ostacolo maggiore di tutti.

Se la disciplina fosse il fatto „iniziale", davvero l'opera nostra sarebbe inutile. Il bambino dovrebbe avere in tal caso un istinto sicuro e capace di fronteggiare tutti gli ostacoli. E il bambino di tre anni che si presenta nelle scuole, è invece un lottatore che sta già per essere vinto nella repressione e che ha sviluppato forme di difesa che mascherano la sua più profonda natura.

Quelle energie superiori capaci di condurlo alla pace della disciplina — e alla divina „sapienza" — si sono addormentate, e rimane sveglio l'essere superficiale che si esaurisce nella in-coordinazione dei movimenti, delle idee vaganti, e che cerca di "contraddire" o di „sfuggire" all'oppressione che l'adulto gli fece soffrire.

La sua anima già mascherata — fa pensare alle profezie lamentose di Baruch: „Ascolta i comandamenti di vita: qual'è il motivo per cui sei in terra nemica, e invecchi in paese straniero? Se avessi camminato nelle vie di Dio Saresti certo vissuto in una eterna pace I giovani vider la luce e abitarono sulla terra, ma non conobbero la via della disciplina e non ne compresero le direzioni, né i loro figli la abbracciarono: essa s'allontanò da loro: di essa non si udì più parola sulla terra".

Ma la sapienza e la disciplina sono pronte a svegliarsi nell'anima del piccolo bambino: la repressione ha operato in lui, ma non ha ancora edificato. La nostra attesa non sarà vana.

La scuola deve dare allo spirito del bambino la liberazione; e offrirgli un campo di espansione. La maestra deve ricordare però che le reazioni di difesa e tutti i caratteri inferiori che il bambino ha acquistato, sone anch'essi ostacoli all'espansione della vita spirituale — e il fanciullo se ne deve liberare. Questo è il punto di partenza dell' „educazione". Se la maestra non può ancora distinguere gli atti impulsivi dal moto spontaneo che sgorga da uno spirito calmo, la sua azione non porterà alcun frutto.

Le radici del sapere della maestra risiedono perciò in questa capacità di distinguere „le attività" — che appaiono entrambe „spontanee", poiché il bambino le compie volontariamente: ma che hanno significato opposto. E' solo dopo aver acquistato un tale potere di discriminazione, che la maestra può diventare „osservatrice" — e „guida". E' una preparazione analoga a quella del medico: egli deve innanzi tutto distinguere i fatti fisiologici da quelli patologici: se non è capace di separare la salute dalla malattia — e si limita solo a distinguere un uomo vivo da un uomo morto — non potrà avanzare nella distinzione sempre più fine tra i vari fenomeni patologici — cioè sarà impossibile per lui il fare mai una diagnosi di malattia.

Questa base fondamentale di distinzione tra il „bene" e il „male" è il lume che bisogna portare in mano per non procedere all'oscuro nella via nascosta della perfezione e della disciplina.

E' possibile determinare praticamente alcuni caratteri, o alcuni „quadri" abbastanza chiari e semplici per aiutare anche teoricamente a riconoscere i vari stadi per i quali passa l'anima infantile nella sua ascensione verso la disciplina?

E' possibile: e ciò diviene pietra angolare per la maestra pratica.

Il bambino nel caos.

Consideriamo il bambino di tre o quattro anni di età — non ancora toccato da quei fatti che edificano in lui la disciplina interiore. — Ci sono tre caratteri che esistono insieme, e che

sono facili a riconoscere anche avendone avuto la piú semplice descrizione:

1. I movimenti volontari sono disordinati. Non consideriamo lo scopo a cui tendono i movimenti, ma i movimenti in se stessi: manca una vera coordinazione. Questo sintoma che un medico di malattie nervose potrebbe apprezzare piú di un filosofo — ha un grande valore. Il medico osserva alcuni fatti *minimi* nei movimenti volontari di un ammalato grave, per es; di un paralitico nei primi stadi della paralisi progressiva. Il medico sa che „quei fatti minimi” hanno una importanza così fondamentale, che su essi basa la sua diagnosi assai piú che sulle forme di delirio o sugli atti di condotta sociale sregolata — i quali pure formano il grande quadro patologico della malattia suddetta. Quel piccolo bambino che „compie *male* i suoi movimenti” avrà molte altre manifestazioni clamorose, come il disordine degli atti, la scompostezza, le grida, le grimaces; ma tutto questo non ha un vero valore. L' „educazione” tendente a „coordinare” delicatamente dei movimenti fini — farà con ciò solo scomparire tutto il quadro di disordine nei movimenti volontari. Piú che cercare di „correggere” le mille applicazioni esteriori di questo fatto unico, basterà che la maestra offra un mezzo di sviluppo interessante il cui uso porti a perfezionare movimenti minimi.

(Appoggiare un piccolo cubetto leggero nel centro di un quadrato, ecc.)

2. Un altro carattere che va congiunto sempre con il precedente, è la difficoltà o la incapacità del bambino a fissare l'attenzione su cose reali. — La sua mente divaga piuttosto nei campi della fantasia. — Il bimbo, maneggiando indifferentemente pietruzze o foglie secche di un giardino, parlerà di preparare dei succulenti pranzi, di apparecchiare magnifiche tavole, di fare inviti; — e progredirà forse la sua immaginazione con l'età. — La mente si affatica allontanandosi sempre piú della sua „funzione normale” diventando uno strumento inutile dello spirito che ha bisogno di svilupparla per utilizzare „la vita interiore”. Quanti crederanno che tale sforzo disgregante la per-

sonalità è quello appunto che sviluppa la vita interiore! Perché — essi dicono — è giusto la „vita interiore“ che crea — e al di fuori non c'è materia — o ce n'è un'ombra: come sassolini o foglie secche.

Ma la vita interiore si costruisce coll'unità della personalità — e con l'orientamento nel mondo esterno — quale base di vita fondamentale. Quella mente vagante che si allontana dalla realtà — si allontana dalla sua funzione normale, dalla sua salute, cioè. Là nel mondo verso il quale si dirige non ci può essere controllo di errore — né cosa alcuna che garantisca l'ordine nelle idee —: *l'attenzione* sulle cose reali va scomparendo nelle sue possibilità future. E' una distinzione fine — ma quell' apparente vita interiore dell' immaginazione — è una tisi dell'organo la cui funzione è essenziale alla vita dello spirito. La maestra che cerchi di „attirare l'attenzione del bambino“ su qualche cosa di reale — rendendo la realtà pratica e attraente — quella che giungerà a fare interessare il bambino ad una vera tavola da apparecchiare, a un vero pranzo da servire, *chiamerà* come una tromba del giudizio, la mente che si era allontanata dalle vie sicure della sua salute. E i fini movimenti coordinati, insieme all'attenzione richiamata sulla realtà, saranno il rimedio unicamente necessario. Non occorre correggere ad una ad una quelle tante e più o meno clamorose applicazioni di una deviazione unica. Appena *il potere* di orientare la mente su cose reali si è iniziato, la mente è presa, è risanata, e funzionerà ormai normalmente.

3. Il terzo fatto concomitante con gli altri due, è un'attitudine all' *imitazione* — che si fa sempre più *pronta* e più *rapida*. Questo segno di profonda debolezza che è una esagerazione di fatti normali nei bambini di due anni — (l'imitazione di piccolissimi bambini è tutta diversa e non se ne può trattare in questa occasione) sta in accordo con una volontà che non ha preparato i suoi strumenti, né i suoi scopi nella vita reale e *segue* l' indicazione altrui; il fanciullo che non è nemmeno penetrato ancora nel cammino della perfezione-rimane come un essere senza guida che segue la prima cosa che gli capita.

Chi osserva il bimbo di due anni „che imita solo certe cose determinate" che lo iniziano alla conoscenza della vita sarà ben presto capace di riconoscere la forma degenerativa della imitazione, della quale parlo qui. Imitazione di cose che stanno in rapporto col disordine motore e con la instabilità della mente: e che porta l'anima del bambino a discendere giù come a salti una scala degradante.

Basterà che un bambino nella classe commetta un atto di clamoroso disordine: come gettarsi in terra ridendo e gridando — e molti o forse tutti bambini si getteranno ancora più chiassosamente attorno a lui. Ogni atto scorretto si moltiplica in un gruppo di fanciulli, o forse in tutta la classe.

Queste „congregazioni" che si formano da una imitazione fulminea, creano *la collettività* nel disordine: quasi l'opposto della vita sociale che è fatta di ordine e di lavoro. L'imitazione propaga ed esalta il difetto di un solo-individuo: rappresenta il terreno di cultura, il „locus minoris resistentiae" dove attecchisce la degenerazione.

Più questa specie¹ di degenerazione si sviluppa e più si fa difficile *l'obbedienza* verso chi chiama l'anima a risalire in alto.

Ma basterà far penetrare il bambino nella giusta via — e tutte le conseguenze più varie di un solo errore saranno delegate.

Il Richiamo.

La maestra che si trovasse a dirigere tutta una classe di tali bambini, non avendo portato altro con sé che l'idea basamentale di „lasciare liberi" i bambini nelle loro espressioni spontanee, e di offrire i materiali di sviluppo, potrebbe trovarsi in una angosciata situazione. Il piccolo inferno che già è nato nelle anime infantili, utilizzerebbe il materiale ad esaltarlo: e la passività della maestra verrebbe sopraffatta da un disordine inconcepibile. No; quella maestra che per scarsità di pratica e per troppa rigidità o per semplicismo di principi o di idee si trovasse in tale situazione — pensi ai poteri dormienti in quelle piccole anime divine, generose e pure — le chiami: svegli

chi dorme con la sua voce con la sua frase. Aiuti chi scende pazzamente a risalire su. Una voce energica, un richiamo assoluto — è la sola opera di carità verso quelle anime. —

Non tema di distruggere il male —

E' il bene che non bisogna distruggere. Come il fanciullo si deve chiamare per nome affinché ci risponda, così anche l'anima *deve* essere vigorosamente chiamata e svegliata. La maestra ritiri il materiale dalla scuola — e i principî appresi dalla mente: e risolva praticamente il suo problema del „richiamo". Sôlo la sua intelligenza può risolvere un tale problema, che é vario in ogni suo singolo caso. — La maestra conosce i *sintomi fondamentali* — e i rimedi diretti — la teoria del trattamento: — e poi è *lei che fa il resto*. Il buon medico, come la buona maestra, sono *individualità*; non sono né la medicina, né il metodo educativo.

Se è necessaria una voce alta in qualche momento per sopraffare un disordine che l'imitazione ha reso generale ed uniforme, o se è utile il parlare all'orecchio di un piccolo gruppo di bimbi, ciò che potrebbe richiamare la curiosità di altri bambini e far così sospendere il disordine; o se è un accordo suonato violentemente al pianoforte che faccia sospendere il disordine come una frustata che spezzi la mala attività — questi sono particolari rimessi alla maestra, che fa i suoi primi passi sul nuovo cammino.

Il fragile ordine.

Una maestra pratica non avrà mai il disordine estremo — poiché essa, prima di ritirarsi nella inazione, è „vigile" per qualche tempo — e dirige dall'esterno i bambini per „prepararli" negativamente, cioè per frenare i movimenti scomposti. C'è per questo una serie di esercizi preparatorî che la maestra non deve dimenticare: e i bambini la cui mente è assente dal mondo reale — devono sentire l' „aiuto del personaggio forte" che è la maestra: calma, sicura e paziente, la cui voce parla ai bambini, li comanda e li esorta. Trasportare sedie e tavolini senza far rumore — disporre una fila di seggioline e sedervisi sopra, correre da un estremo all'altro della sala in punta di

piedi, sone gli esercizi piú adatti: Ovvero, se la maestra é veramente sicura di se stessa — basterá probabilmente che dica: „Adesso restiamo quieti" e tutti per incanto si calmeranno. Gli esercizi piú semplici di vita pratica potranno trattenere sulla terra del lavoro le piccole anime fuggenti che furono cosí richiamate. A poco a poco la maestra offrirá il materiale, senza mai lasciarlo alla libera scelta dei bambini, finché non sia conosciuto nell'uso.

Il secondo livello.

Ecco venire una classe tranquilla — i bambini sono in rapporto diretto colla realtà — compaiono azioni che tendono a raggiungere uno scopo pratico: come spolverare un tavolino, lavare una macchia e simili: vanno alla credenza, prendono un materiale e lo usano correttamente. Sembra che la libera scelta si eserciti con perfezione. In generale la maestra è soddisfatta, ma constata che il materiale determinato dal metodo è insufficiente e si trova innanzi ad una „evidente necessità" di aumentarlo. „In una settimana i bambini hanno già passato e ripassato tutto il materiale". Forse la maggior parte della scuole non avanzano piú di cosí.

Ma c'è un carattere, uno solo, che rivela la „fragilità" di questo „ordine" apparente — e minaccia il crollo di tutto l'edificio educativo: i bambini passano da cosa a cosa — compiono ogni esercizio una volta sola e subito dopo cambiano il materiale. Il passeggio verso i luoghi dove i materiali sono esposti, è continuo. Nessun bambino trovó, sulla terra dove è disceso, l'interesse che sia degno di svegliare il divino, possente Io(ego) che è in lui: la sua personalità „non si esercita" a svolgere e fortificare se stessa. — In quel tocco passeggero di tutte le cose, il mondo esteriore non può avere su lui l'influenza che mette in equilibrio l'anima col mondo. Il fanciullo è come un'ape che si posa su varî fiori ma non ha trovato *quel fiore* nel quale si fisserà a succhiare il nettare finché ne sia repleto: — e finché senta risvegliare la meravigliosa attività, di comporre la gran costruzione che l'istinto ha deposto in essa.

La maestra sa, in questo stadio dell' „attenzione vagante“, che il suo compito è difficile: ella pure in generale corre da bambino a bambino e penetra in lei un'agitazione angosciosa e affaticante. Molti fanciulli, dietro alle sua spalle, giuocano col materiale, ne sono stanchi, ne fanno cattivo uso. Mentre la maestra si occupa di un bambino, altri commettono errori. Il progresso intellettuale e morale tanto vantato nei bambini, non viene.

Quell' apparente disciplina è cosa assai fragile — e la maestra, avendo la sensazione del disordine che sta per venire, è sempre in tensione. La maggior parte delle maestre che hanno avuto insufficiente pratica — o scarsa preparazione — finiscono col ritenere che quel bambino vantato e aspettato è una illusione, o meglio „un ideale“ — ma che in realtà, una classe tenuta così colle sue forze nervose, è affaticante per la maestra e poco profittevole all'istruzione dei bambine.

E' necessario che la maestra sappia giudicare i bambini — essi sono in un periodo di „passaggio“ — stanno „fuori della porta“. La loro anima sta „bussando“ ed è in inconscia aspettativa „che le sia aperto“. Ma in quanto al suo progresso è poco più di prima. Questo stadio è più vicino al caos che alla disciplina. „Tutti i lavori“ di tali bambini saranno imperfetti: i movimenti nella elementare loro coordinazione sono senza forza né eleganza, e gli atti mutevoli, senza costanza. Rispetto al primo grado di „assenza dal mondo reale“ hanno appena progredito: è solo una „convalescenza“ dopo la malattia.

E' in tale delicato periodo di sviluppo, che la maestra deve esercitare due differenti azioni: prima „la vigilanza“ su tutti i bambini: e poi le „lezioni individuali“ cioè la *offerta* regolare del materiale, illustrandone l'uso „e s'atto“. La distribuzione dell'attenzione e la lezione data esattamente, sono i due mezzi che ha la maestra per aiutare lo sviluppo infantile. Si guarderà bene, in questo periodo, dal mai volger le spalle all'intera classe per occuparsi di un solo bambino. La sua „presenza“ deve riuscire „sensibile“ a tutte quelle anime girovaghe in cerca di vita eterna. Le lezioni esatte ed energiche rivolte nell'in-

timità ad ogni individuo separatamente, sono una offerta che la maestra fa all'anima profonda del bambino. E' grande l'aspettativa di chi rivolge tali chiamate. Un giorno qualche spirito si sveglierà: l'lo profondo diventerà padrone di un oggetto — l'attenzione diventerà fissa sulla ripetizione dello stesso esercizio — l'esattezza di esecuzione diventerà perfetta: il volto irradiato di gloria racconterà il gran fatto della rinascita,

La disciplina.

La „libera scelta“ è un atto superiore: il bambino che „sa“ ciò di cui ha oramai bisogno per esercitarsi e sviluppare la sua vita spirituale — fa „una libera scelta“. Invece non può ancora parlarsi di „scelta libera“ quando sono tutti gli oggetti esterni che chiamano il bambino-ed egli, vuoto di volontà potente e direttiva, cede e passa da cosa a cosa senza fine. Questa è una delle differenze più importanti che la maestra deve essere capace di osservare. Il bambino che non ubbidisce ancora alla „guida interiore“ non è il *bambino libero* che penetrò nella lunga e stretta via della perfezione. Anzi è ancora servo delle superficiali sensazioni che fanno di lui un giuoco dell'ambiente: i vari oggetti si lanciano l'uno all'altro quell'anima di bambino, come se vi giocassero a palla. *L'uomo* nasce allorché l'anima sente se stessa — si fissa, si orienta, e „sceglie“.

Un fatto così semplice epur grandioso — si trova in ogni essere per l'istinto insito in tutte le cose viventi — di „scegliere“ nell'ambiente multiforme e complicato ciò, e solo ciò, che è nettamente necessario per mantenere la vita. Le radici di ogni pianta „scelgono“ tra le tante sostanze del suolo — quelle che le sono necessarie: la vampirella delle spirogire „sceglie“, tra le alghe delle fontane, quella che è destinata a nutrirla; così come ogni insetto *sceglie* definitivamente e si fissa nel fiore creato per riveverlo. Nell'uomo però così meraviglioso discernimento non è un puro istinto, ma piuttosto una conquista. Il bambino, ha, specialmente nei primi anni della vita, una „sensibilità“ interiore dei propri bisogni spirituali, che la repressione e l'educazione errata possono occultare sotto una schiavitù dei

sensi esteriori, pronti a ogni oggetto. Noi abbiamo perduto quella sensibilità profonda e vitale — e ci troviamo dinanzi alla sua resurrezione nei bambini, quasi come dinanzi a un mistero che ci si riveli. E' questo atto „delicato" della libera scelta che un maestro non iniziato alla osservazione calpesterebbe senza avvedersene — come il piede d' un elefante schiaccerebbe un bocciolo nascente tra l'erba del prato. Quel bambino che si è „fissato" con grande interesse sopra l'oggetto *scelto* — e che vi si concentra nella ripetizione dell'esercizio, è un'anima salvata, nel senso della salute spirituale di cui parliamo. Non c'è bisogno di occuparsi di lui oramai; altro che per servirlo preparando le cose necessarie nell'ambiente e abbattendo gli ostacoli che potrebbero presentarsi nel suo cammino di perfezione.

E' dunque soltanto innanzi a questi fenomeni che la maestra deve „reprimere se stessa", affinché lo spirito infantile sia libero d'espandersi e d'esprimersi — qui il compito importante suo è di „non interrompere" gli atti infantili — (poichè colei che era aiuto — potrebbe diventare ostacolo e causa di repressione). Questa è l'epoca nella quale la „delicatezza" della preparazione di una maestra sta nel trattenere „l'impulso di aiutare" come l' „impulso di ammirare" —: ed essa deve imparare la missione non facile di „servire" — o, secondo i casi, di „attendere osservando". La „serva" è ancora un' osservatrice — poichè il fenomeno nascente della „concentrazione" nel bambino è veramente delicato come un bocciuolo che sta per aprirsi. Essa non osserva più per far sentire che è „presente" e aiutare colla sua forza anime deboli, ma osserva per „cercare" il bambino che ha concentrato la sua attenzione, per riconoscere il glorioso " neonato dello spirito".

Il bambino che si concentra, rimane chiuso in sè e isolato dall'ambiente e dalle persone che lo circondano. Per un istante — è lo spirito dell'eremita nel deserto: è allora che nasce in lui una nuova coscienza, la coscienza della propria individualità. Finita la concentrazione sembra accorgersi quasi per la prima volta del mondo esteriore che lo circonda, e dove farà continue

scoperte; e dei compagni ai quali stá per prendere un interesse amorevole.

Si sveglia come un amatore delle *persone* e delle *cose* — pacifico e dolce di affetto verso tutti — e ammiratore di ogni bellezza. — Infatti è chiaro il procedimento della sua natura spirituale — quel doversi distaccare dall'insieme per acquistare il potere di unirvisi. Bisogna uscire di città per ammirarne il panorama —; é dall'areoplano, cioè elevandosi dalla terra, che se ne vedono i contorni. Così l'anima umana per esistere e per „vivere" coll'umanità- deve farsi solitaria, fortificarsi- e quindi vedere e amare le creature. E' l'eremita colui che si prepara a vedere con sapienza e giustizia i bisogni sociali che rimangono oscuri e insensibili all'umanità amalgamata — ed è la preparazione nel deserto che precede le grandi missioni di amore e di pace.

Il bambino si pone con semplicitá in un'attitudine di profondo isolamento — e anche in lui le conseguenze sono il carattere forte e pacifico, che irradia amore tutto all'intorno. Su questa attitudine, il sacrificio di sè, il lavoro costante, l'obbedienza e insieme la gioia del vivere-sgorgano come una fresca sorgente che si sia fatta spazio tra i macigni- e che è destinata ad aiutare la vita tutto intorno a se. E' per questo che la concentrazione porta come conseguenza un vivissimo sentimento sociale. — La maestra deve esservi preparata: essa comincia ad esistere innanzi ai piccoli cuori nascenti come una creatura amata. Essi la „scoprono" come hanno scoperto il bell'azzurro del cielo — e gli impercettibili profumi delle erbicciole nascoste nei campi. I bisogni di questi fanciulli ricchi di entusiasmo — esplosivi nei loro progressi meravigliosi, potrebbero confondere la maestra inesperta. Come nei primi gradi non era l'enorme quantità di atti disordinati che doveva preoccuparla, ma solo i segni di bisogni fondamentali: così adesso non è la molteplice manifestazione di atti risplendenti di ricchezza morale che deve sopraffarla.

Essa deve mirare sempre a qualcosa di semplice e di centrale — ebe è come il fulcro che regge le porte — nascosto, necessario — ma indipendente dai pregi delle porte scolpite o

ricche di ori e di gemme preziose. — La sua missione ha sempre di mira qualche cosa di preciso e di costante. — Ella comincia a sentire che „non è necessaria" perchè i progressi dei bambini non sono in rapporto coll'azione sua. Sempre più vede i fanciulli farsi indipendenti nella libera scelta, nella ricca espressione — e nei progressi che hanno talvolta del prodigioso. — Essa si sente „serva" nell'umile preparazione dell'ambiente — e nelle cure di occultare se stessa — è il San Giovanni Battista dopo la rivelazione pubblica del Messia: „conviene che io diminuisca ed egli cresca".

Questo è invece il momento in cui stá per essere ricercata la sua *autoritá*. Molte e molte devote amatrici di quelle anime ambili, avranno avuto l'esperienza di un fatto apparentemente arido e insignificante. I bambini che hanno un qualche prodotto della loro intelligente attività: un disegno, qualche parola scritta, o simili piccole cose — vanno dalla maestra e le domandano se è fatto bene. Essi non vanno mai a chiederle né che cosa devono fare, né come devono fare — anzi si difendono da ogni aiuto: la scelta e l'esecuzione sono i tesori dell'anima liberata. Ma, *compiuto* il lavoro, „vanno a chiedere la sanzione della sua *autoritá*". Quasi un medesimo istinto li porta a difendere energicamente la loro „solitudine" — la loro occulta ubbidienza alle direttive interiori che ciascuno sembra ascoltare dentro di sé: e poi a sottoporre alla *autoritá* esteriore il loro operato — quasi per rendersi sicuri di „veramente procedere sul giusto cammino". Questo fa pensare ai primi passi del piccolo corpo non ancora sicuro — che ha bisogno di vedere le braccia dell'adulto distese, pronte a impedire la caduta — benchè le forze che iniziano e perfezionano l'atto di camminare, stiano dentro il bambino stesso. La maestra deve rispondere con un assentimento, incoraggiare con un sorriso-come la mamma sorride al bambinetto che fa i primi passi.

Perchè il perfezionamento, la sicurezza — si devono sviluppare nel fanciullo — da fonti interiori sulle quali nulla può la maestra.

Infatti il bambino, fatto sicuro, non cercherà più l'approvazione dell'*autoritá* ad ogni passo. Egli comincerá ad accumulare i suoi

capolavori del tutto ignoti agli altri — obbedendo al bisogno di produrre di perfezionare in esattezza e in armonia le sue innumerevoli produzioni. Quello che lo interessa è di poter compiere il suo lavoro: — non è nè di farlo ammirare, né di tesorizzarlo come sua proprietà legittima: l'alto istinto creativo che lo guida è del tutto scevro di orgoglio e di avarizia. Molti visitatori delle nostre scuole hanno potuto constatare che la maestra fa vedere i più bei lavori dei bambini, senza mai presentare l'autore. L'apparente oblio di un atto doveroso e onesto viene dall'*abitudine* di sapere che ciò non ha alcuna importanza per i bambini. In qualunque altra scuola la maestra si sentirebbe colpevole se, mostrando un buon lavoro non ne presentasse l'autore, e pur cadendo in tale dimenticanza, forse si sentirebbe la protesta infantile: „Sono io che l'ho fatto”; ma qui l'autore è probabilmente isolato in qualche angolo a eseguire un altro capolavoro — e la cosa che desidera è di non essere interrotto.

E' questo il tempo in cui si stabilisce la „disciplina” — quella forma di pace attiva — di obbedienza e di amore in cui il lavoro si moltiplica e si perfeziona, come in primavera si colorano i fiori e le frutta creano prodotti dolci e dissetanti.

On discipline. — Reflections & Advice

by

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An inexperienced teacher, who is full of enthusiasm and of faith in the attainment of that internal discipline which should grow up in the little community, is faced with certain problems. She understands, and believes, that the children should be free to choose their occupations and should never be interrupted in their spontaneous activities. Neither instruction, nor threats, nor prizes, nor punishments are permitted. The teacher must remain silent and inert, patiently waiting. This she does, withdrawing, ready to efface her own personality, so that the child-spirit may have room to expand freely. She has placed at the disposition of the children a quantity of material — perhaps all the material.

And behold, disorder begins, which grows, and may reach alarming proportions.

Can it be that the principles which she has learnt are wrong?

They are not wrong. Between theory and results there is something lacking: that is to say, practical experience. On this point the inexperienced beginner needs guidance and enlightenment.

Something of the same kind happens to young doctors, and to all who, having gone through a training in the realm of ideas and principles, find themselves left alone face to face with the facts of life, which are more mysterious than the unknown quantity in the mathematician's unsolved problem.

We must remember that the phenomenon of internal discipline is something which must be achieved, not something pre-existent. Our function is that of guides upon the road of discipline. Dis-

cipline will appear when the child has concentrated his attention upon some object which attracts him, and which makes possible not only useful exercise but the control of error. By means of these exercises there comes about a wonderful co-ordination of the child-individuality, making a child calm, radiantly happy, busy, forgetful of self and on that account indifferent to praise or material rewards. These little conquerors of themselves and of the surrounding world are indeed supermen, revealing to us the divine soul that is in man. The teacher's happy task is to show the way to perfection, providing the means and removing the obstacles, beginning with herself. For she may be the greatest obstacle of all.

If discipline were pre-existent, our work would be unnecessary: the child would have a sure instinct which would enable it to overcome all difficulties. But the three-year old child arriving at school is a combatant on the point of being overwhelmed by repression. He has developed a defensive attitude, which masks his deeper nature. The higher energies are dormant which can lead him to disciplined peace and to divine wisdom; all that remains active is the superficial personality which exhausts itself in unco-ordinated movements and wandering ideas, seeking to fight against or flee from adult oppression. The little soul, already encased in a shell, makes us think of the prophetic lamentation of Baruch: "Hear the commandments of life: give ear to understand wisdom. How happeneth it that thou art in thine enemies' land, that thou art waxen old in a strange country? . . . For if thou hadst walked in the way of God, thou shouldest have dwelled in peace for ever . . . Young men have seen light and dwelt upon the earth: but the way of knowledge have they not known, nor understood the paths thereof, nor laid hold of it: their children were far off from that way".

But wisdom and discipline are waiting to be awakened in the little child. Repression has been at work upon him, but his shell has not yet become hardened. Our efforts will not be in vain. School must give the child-spirit its charter, and room for expansion. At the same time the teacher must remember that the

defensive reactions and inferior characteristics generally, which the child has acquired, are obstacles preventing the expansion of spiritual life, and that the child must free itself of these also.

This is the "point of departure" of education. If the teacher cannot distinguish mere impulse from the spontaneous energy which wells up from a spirit at rest, her actions will bear no fruit. The very foundation of the teacher's efficiency consists in the power of distinguishing between these two kinds of activity, both of which appear to be spontaneous, because the child in both cases acts of its own accord, but which have an entirely opposite significance.

It is only when she has acquired this power of discrimination that a teacher can become an observer and guide. The necessary preparation is similar to that of a doctor of medicine: he must first of all learn to distinguish physiological from pathological facts. If he is not capable of distinguishing between health and disease — if all he can do is to distinguish a live man from a dead man — he will not be able to arrive at the fine and ever finer distinctions between pathological phenomena; it will be impossible for him correctly to diagnose disease.

This power of distinguishing between the good and the bad is the lantern we must carry in hand to lighten us upon the obscure road of the discipline that leads to perfection.

Is it possible to single out any symptoms, or combination of symptoms, sufficiently clearly and implicitly to help even theoretically in the recognition of the various stages through which the child-soul passes in its ascent towards discipline? It is possible, and in so doing a corner-stone can be laid for the guidance of the practical teacher.

The Child in a State of Chaos.

Let us consider the three or four year old child, as yet unaffected by the factors which will create in him internal discipline. Three characteristics exist side by side, and can be easily recognised by the help of a simple description.

(1) The voluntary movements are disordered. I do not mean

the intention of the movements, but the movements themselves: fundamental co-ordination is lacking. This symptom, which would have more significance for a medical specialist in nervous diseases than for a philosopher, is of great importance. The physician observes the smallest details concerning the voluntary movements of a patient who is seriously ill; for example, of a paralytic in the first stages of creeping paralysis. The physician knows that these details have so fundamental an importance, that on them he bases his diagnosis, much more than on mental aberration or disordered behaviour, which are also among the symptoms of this disease. The small child who is clumsy in his movements will show many other obvious characteristics, such as disorderly actions, uncontrolled behaviour, screaming and contortions, but all these are of minor significance. An education which delicately co-ordinates the finer movements will by itself obliterate all the disorder of the voluntary movements. Rather than try to correct the thousand external manifestations of one deviation from the right path, it will be enough for the teacher to offer an interesting means of developing skill in the finer movements: placing a small light cube in the centre of a square, and so on.

(2) Another characteristic, which always accompanies the above, is the difficulty or incapacity shown by a child in fixing his attention on real things. His mind prefers to wander in the realms of fantasy. Playing with stones or dead leaves, he talks of preparing delicious banquets, of spreading magnificent tables, of sending out invitations, and his imagination will probably run riot more wildly as he grows older. The mind exhausts itself, divorcing itself constantly more from its normal function, and becoming a useless instrument of the spirit, which needs it for the purpose of developing the inner life. Many people, unfortunately, believe that this force which disintegrates the personality is just the force that develops spiritual life. They maintain that the inner life is by itself creative — outside there is nothing, or only shadows, pebbles and dead leaves.

The inner life builds itself up, on the contrary, on the fun-

damental basis of a unified personality — well orientated in the external world. The wandering mind, which divorces itself from reality, departs from its normal function: departs, that is to say, from health. In that world of fantasy towards which it tends, there is no control of error, nothing which will co-ordinate thought. Attention to real things, with its future applications, becomes impossible. It is a fine distinction, but that life of the imagination, falsely so called, is an atrophy of the very organs whose functions are essential to the spiritual life. The teacher who seeks to attract the attention of the child to something real — making reality accessible and attractive — the teacher who succeeds in interesting the child, say, in laying a real table, serving a real meal — the voice of that teacher will recall, like the sound of a trumpet, the mind which had wandered far from the path of its own welfare. And the co-ordination of the fine movements, together with the recall of the wandering attention to reality, will be the only remedy needed. We need not correct one by one the more or less obvious aspects of the one fundamental deviation. As soon as the power is acquired of fixing the mind on real things, the mind will be restored to health and will function normally.

The third phenomenon, concomitant with the other two, is a tendency towards imitation, which becomes constantly more prompt and rapid. This sign of profound weakness is an exaggeration of normal traits in children of two years. (The imitation of tiny children is of another kind, and cannot be dealt with here). It indicates a will which has not prepared its instruments, nor found its course, but follows the indications of others. The child has not entered on the way of perfection; like a rudderless ship he is the sport of every wind. Anyone who observes a two-year old child, with a limited range of imitative ideas as its sum total of knowledge, will recognise the degenerative form of imitation of which I am speaking, connected with disordination and mental instability, and leading the child downward like the steps of a descending stair.

It is enough that one child in a class should do something

rough and noisy — throwing itself on the ground, perhaps, laughing and shouting — and many, or perhaps all, of the children will follow his example and even outdo him. The foolish act multiplies itself in a group of children, perhaps even throughout the class. This sort of gregariousness leads to a collective disorder, the antithesis of social life which is made up of work and good order. Imitativeness propagates and exalts, among the crowd, the defects of one: it is the point of least resistance where degeneration begins.

The more this kind of degeneration takes hold, the more difficult it is for the children to obey one who calls them to better things. But get them once upon the right road, and an end will come to the varied consequences of one original mistake.

The Recall.

That teacher may find herself in an anxious pass who, finding herself called upon to direct a whole class of such children, has no equipment but the basic idea of offering the children the means of development and then leaving them free to express themselves. The little inferno which has already begun to evolve in these children will draw into itself everything within reach, and the teacher, if passive, will be overwhelmed by noise and muddle almost inconceivable. The teacher, who from inexperience and over-rigidity or over-simplicity of principles and ideas, finds herself in such a situation, must remember the powers which lie dormant in these divinely pure and generous little souls. She must call upon them, waking the sleepers with voice and thought. She must help these little creatures, who are wildly rushing along the downward path, to reascend. A vigorous and determined recall is the only true kindness to these little souls.

Do not fear to destroy evil. It is only the good that we must fear to destroy.

As we must call a child by its name before it can answer, so it is necessary to call vigorously to awaken the soul. The teacher must take her materials from the school, and her prin-

ciples from what she has learnt; and then she must face practically, for herself, the question of this recall. Only her own intelligence can solve the problem, which will be different in every individual case. The teacher knows the fundamental symptoms and the obvious remedies, — the theory, in fact, of treatment, and then *it is she who does the rest*. The good doctor, like the good teacher, is an individual, not merely a machine for administering medicine or applying educational methods. Details must be left to the judgment of the teacher who is taking her first steps on the new path, as for instance whether general disorder is best quelled by raising the voice, or whether it is best to whisper to a few of the children so as to rouse the curiosity of others and make them quiet. A chord struck loudly upon the pianoforte will sometimes check disorder like the stroke of a whip.

Apparent Order.

An experienced teacher will never get extreme disorder in a class, because before she retires into the background she will be watchful for a time, directing the children so as to "prepare" them in a negative sense, that is to say, in the direction of checking uncontrolled movements. There is for this a series of preparatory exercises which the teacher must bear in mind, and children whose minds are wandering away from reality should feel the strong help which the teacher should be able to give. Calm, steadfast and patient, her voice should reach the children, commending or exhorting. Some exercises are especially useful, such as rearranging chairs and tables without making a noise; arranging a row of chairs and sitting down upon them; running from end to end of the room on tip-toe. If the teacher is really sure of herself it may be enough to say: "Now let us be quiet", and calm will fall as by enchantment. The simplest exercises of practical life will bring down to the *terra firma* of real work the little errant spirits thus recalled. Little by little the teacher will offer the didactic material, never, however, leaving it to the children's free choice until they understand the uses of it.

Now we see a quiet class: the children are in direct touch with reality; their occupations have a practical aim, such as dusting a table, removing a stain, and so on; they go to the cupboard, take a piece of the material and use it correctly. It appears as if the faculty of free choice improved with exercise. In general the teacher is satisfied, but it appears to her that the material, as determined by the Montessori method, is insufficient, and she finds herself faced by the evident necessity of adding to it: "In a week a child has used all the material again and again". Perhaps the majority of schools do not get beyond this point.

One factor — one only — reveals the fragility of this apparent good order, and threatens the collapse of the whole fabric: the children pass from one thing to another, do each exercise once, and take something else from the cupboard. The journeying to and from the cupboard is perpetual. Not one of the children is finding, on this earth to which he has descended, any interest which will be worthy of awakening the divine and strong nature within him: his personality is not exercising, developing and fortifying itself. In these fleeting contacts, the outer world cannot have upon him the influence which puts the spirit in equilibrium with the world. The child is like a bee, which flits from blossom to blossom, but does not find the flower on which to settle, exhaust the nectar and satisfy itself: he does not settle down to work to that point where he feels awakening within itself the wonderful instinctive activity destined to build up his character and mind.

The teacher feels, at this stage of wandering attention, that her task is difficult; she also, in general, runs from child to child, inspiring them with her own anxious, tiring agitation. Many of the children when her back is turned play with the material, weary of it and put it to foolish uses. While the teacher is occupied with one child, others make mistakes. The moral and intellectual progress, so confidently expected, does not take lace.

This apparent discipline is a very fragile thing, and the teacher, who feels disorder in the air, is all the time in a state

of tension. The great majority of insufficiently trained or experienced teachers end by believing that the "new child", so eagerly expected, of which so much has been said, is only an illusion, an ideal; and that in reality a class held together thus by an effort of nervous energy is tiring for the teacher and unprofitable for the child.

It is necessary that the teacher should be able to understand the children's condition: they are going through a transitional period — they stand without the door. The little spirits are knocking, waiting till it shall be opened unto them. In the matter of progress, however, there is little to be observed. This stage of affairs is nearer to chaos than to discipline. All the work of such children will be imperfect; the elementary movements of co-ordination will be without strength or grace, and their actions capricious. In comparison with the first stage, in which they are out of touch with reality, they have scarcely progressed; this is only a convalescence after illness.

In this crucial period of development the teacher has to exercise two different functions: first, watchfulness over all the children; and secondly, the giving of individual lessons that is to say, she must offer the material regularly, showing its exact uses. General watchfulness and individual lessons exactly given are the two means by which the teacher can help infant development. She must take care at this stage never to turn her back on the class while attending to a single child. Her presence must be felt by all those little souls wandering in search of eternal life. The lesson, exact and forceful, given in intimacy to each separate individual, is an offering which the teacher makes to the profundity of the child-spirit. She who thus calls takes on an aspect of grandeur. One day some little spirit awakens; the ego of some child takes possession of some object; attention becomes fixed on the repetition of some one exercise; executive skill perfects itself; the irradiation of the child's countenance indicates that its spirit is being born anew.

Discipline.

Free choice is a higher activity: only the child who knows

what he needs to exercise and develop his spiritual life can really choose freely. One cannot speak of free choice when every external object calls the child equally, and the child, lacking in directing will-power, follows everything and passes from one thing to another without end. This is one of the most important distinctions which the teacher should be able to make. The child who does not yet obey an internal guide is not the free child entering upon the long and narrow way of perfection. He is still the slave of superficial sensations, which make him the sport of his environment; his spirit is tossed between one object and another, like a ball. The man is born when the soul feels itself; fixes, orientates itself and chooses.

This grand and simple phenomenon appears in every created being; all living things possess the power of choosing in a complicated and many-sided environment that, and only that, which is actually necessary to maintain life. The roots of every plant choose from among the many elements of the soil those which they need; an insect chooses definitely and fixes itself in the flower formed to receive it. In man, however, the same wonderful discernment is not pure instinct, but something which has to be won. Children have, especially in the first years of life, an internal sensibility as to their spiritual needs, which repression and wrong education can cause to vanish, to be replaced by a kind of slavery of the external senses to every surrounding object. We ourselves have lost that profound and vital sensibility, and we find ourselves before its resurrection in the child as before a mystery revealed. It reveals itself in that delicate act of free choice, which a teacher untrained in observation would trample under foot before she had noticed it, as an elephant might crush a flower-bud springing up in the grass. The child who has fixed his attention on a chosen object, and is concentrating his being upon the repetition of an exercise, is a saved soul, in the sense of spiritual health of which we are speaking. There is no need henceforth to occupy ourselves with him, otherwise than by preparing his environment so that it will supply his needs, and by removing obstacles

which might obstruct for him the way of perfection.

It is before these higher phenomena that the teacher should repress herself, so that the child-spirit may be free to expand and to express itself; it is that the importance of her task lies in not interrupting the child at work. This is the period in which the teacher's moral delicacy, acquired during training, will show itself in her repression of the impulse to help, as of the impulse to admire. She must learn what is not easy — how to serve, or perhaps only to stand by observing. In serving also she must observe, for the dawning phenomenon of concentration in the child is as delicate as a bud just about to open. She will not observe now for the purpose of making her presence felt and of assisting weak spirits with her own strength; she will observe in order to recognise the child who has concentrated his attention, in order to behold the glorious rebirth of the spirit.

The child who concentrates is happy within himself, unconscious of his neighbours and of his surroundings. For an instant his spirit is like the spirit of the hermit in the desert, and there is born in him a new consciousness, the consciousness of his own individuality. When the concentration passes, he seems to become aware, as if for the first time, of the world which surrounds him, with unlimited scope for further discoveries; aware also of his companions in whom he shows a loving interest.

He awakens to a love of persons and of things — gentle and affectionate towards all, and ready to admire everything that is beautiful. The spiritual process is evident; he has to detach himself from his world in order to acquire the power of uniting himself to it. We go out of the city to admire it spread out in panorama, and it is from an aeroplane — rising, that is to say, above the earth, — that one can best see terrestrial features. Thus also the human spirit, in order to exist and to dwell with its fellows, must retire into solitude and fortify itself, and after that behold with love its fellow creatures. The saint in solitude prepares himself to regard with wisdom and justice those social needs which are hidden from the mass of

humanity; the preparation in the desert precedes the great mission of love and peace.

The child simply takes up an attitude of profound isolation, and in him also the result is a strong peaceful character, radiating love on all around. From this attitude there arise self-sacrifice, unremitting work, obedience, and at the same time a joy in living, like a bright spring that sprang up among surrounding rocks, and is destined to help all living creatures around it. The result of concentration is an awakened social sense, and the teacher should be prepared for what follows: to these little new-born hearts she will be a creature beloved. They will "discover" her, just as they have newly discovered the blueness of the sky and the almost imperceptible scent of tiny flowers that nestle in the grass. The needs of these children — rich in enthusiasm, and as it were explosive in their wonderful progress, might puzzle an inexperienced teacher. In the early stages it was not the children's many disorderly acts which she had to consider, but only the signs of fundamental needs, and so now, the innumerable signs of moral richness and beauty must not overwhelm her. She must aim always at something simple and central which is like the pivot on which a door revolves — hidden necessarily, but independent of the ornamentation of the door, whether sculptured or rich with gold and precious stones. Her mission aims always at something constant and precise. She begins to feel herself unnecessary, because the children's progress is disproportionate to the part she plays in it. Constantly she sees the children becoming more independent in their choice of occupations and in their rich faculty of expression, and their progress seems sometimes almost miraculous. She feels herself a servant only, whose task is the humble one of preparing the environment and effacing herself. She remembers the words of John the Baptist after the Messiah had revealed himself: "He must increase, but I must decrease".

This, however, is the time at which her authority will be most sought by the children. Many devotees of these lovable little souls have an experience, apparently insignificant: a child who

has produced something by his intelligent activity — a drawing, a written word, or some such little thing — comes to the teacher and asks her if he has done it well. They never come and ask what they should do, nor how they should do it — indeed they defend themselves against all help; choice and execution are treasured prerogatives of the freed soul. But when the work is done they go and ask for the sanction of her authority. A similar instinct makes them defend energetically their spiritual privacy — their mysterious obedience to the directing voice which each seems to hear within himself — and then submit to exterior authority their actions, as if to make sure that they are really upon the right way. It makes one think of the first steps of the little child with uncertain limbs, who needs to see the grown-up person's arms outstretched and ready to prevent a fall, although the powers which initiate and perfect the act of walking are within the child himself. The teacher should respond with a word of consent, encourage with a smile, as the mother smiles at the child taking his first steps. For perfection, security must develop within the child, from internal sources with which the teacher has nothing to do.

The child, in fact, once secure, will no longer seek the approval of authority for every step. He will begin to accumulate completed work of which the other knows nothing, obeying simply the need to produce in quantity and to perfect his productions. What interests him is to finish his work, not to have it admired nor to hoard it as his own property; the noble instinct which actuates him is far removed from pride or avarice. Many visitors to our schools will remember how teachers have shown them the children's best work without ever indicating the authors. This apparent oversight of honest, laborious work comes from the teacher's habitual knowledge that it is of no importance to the children. In any other kind of school a teacher would feel guilty if, in showing a good piece of work, she did not introduce the author of it. If she forgot to do so, she might even hear the childish protest: "I did that!" In our schools, on the other hand, the child who did the work is

probably by himself in a corner engaged upon another wonderful effort, and his great wish is not to be interrupted.

This is the period in which discipline establishes itself: a form of active peace, of obedience and love, in which work perfects itself and multiplies, just as in spring time the flowers take on colour, leading on to the production of sweet and refreshing fruits.

Die Zukunftsbedeutung des kindlichen Spiels

von

Prof. WILLIAM STERN (HAMBURG).

Die Frage nach dem Sinn des kindlichen Spielens hat von Rousseau's Tagen bis auf unsere Zeit immer von Neuem die denkenden Menschen beschäftigt. Wir wissen heute, dass eine ganze Reihe von Momenten zusammenkommen, welche die Lebensbedeutung des kindlichen Spieles bestimmen.

Auf der einen Seite sind es die fortwährend einwirkenden Vorbilder der *Umwelt*, die vom Kind spielend aufgegriffen und mühelos seinem geistigen Besitz einverleibt werden; hierbei ist der unermüdliche *Nachahmungstrieb* wirksam. Infolge dieser Nachahmung spiegelt sich der Aufenthaltsort des Kindes ebenso wie der Beruf des Vaters, die periodischen Vorgänge der Jahreszeit ebenso wie aufsehererregende Zeitereignisse im kindlichen Spiele wider. Das Hochgebirgskind spielt Jagen und Schmuggeln, das Kind von der Waterkant Dampfschiff und Fischfang. An einem Ort, wo zum ersten Male ein Flieger sichtbar gewesen, wird unweigerlich wochenlang diese Sensation im kindlichen Spiel nachgebildet. Die Kriegsspiele der Knaben hieszen zu einer gewissen Zeit „Russen und Japaner“, zu einer anderen „Deutsche und Franzosen“ — so wirft sogar die Weltgeschichte ihre Schatten bis in die Spielgefilde der Kinder hinein.

Sodann aber — und das ist das Wichtigere — sind es im Innern des Kindes selbst wirksame, ganz *elementare Instinkte*, die es zum Spielen veranlassen. Das Kind ahnt selbst nichts von jenen mächtigen Triebkräften, die von grösster Bedeutung für sein Leben sind und sich zunächst in der harmlosen Form

¹⁾ Der Text des Aufsatzes stammt zum grösseren Teil aus dem soeben erschienenen Buche: W. Stern, *Psychologie der frühen Kindheit*, III umgearbeitete und erweiterte Auflage. Leipzig, Quelle u. Meyer 1923.

des Spieles einen Ausweg bahnen. Da regen sich aus der Vergangenheit erbliche Tendenzen, die von frühen Vorfahren her im Kinde schlummerten und nun nur erwachen, um in Spielform überwunden und abreagiert zu werden.¹⁾ Da sind alle *gegenwärtig* wirksamen Triebformen und Interessenrichtungen, ständig beteiligt am spielerischen Tun: der Wissenstrieb, der Bewegungstrieb, der Schmucktrieb, erotische Neigungen²⁾ usw. Und da ist es endlich die noch ungeborene *Lebenszukunft*, die im Spiel prophetisch vorausgenommen wird. Hiervon soll im folgenden die Rede sein.

Die verschiedenen Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten des Menschen werden zu sehr verschiedenen Zeiten „fällig“, d.h. lebensnotwendig. Nun zeigt es sich aber, dass sich die inneren Dispositionen, die zu jenen Fertigkeiten führen, in ihrem psychischen Erwachen durchaus nicht nach dem eigentlichen Fälligkeitstermin richten, sondern schon viel früher melden. Diese *Verfrühung* scheint ein allgemeines Gesetz zu sein; keine seelische Funktion ist von ihr ausgeschlossen. Mit instinktiver Selbstverständlichkeit stellen sich da plötzlich Betätigungsrichtungen ein, die für das gegenwärtige Leben des Menschen noch gar nicht bestimmt sind, aber durch ihre oft geradezu elementare Wucht verraten, welchem unbewussten Ziel der Mensch zustrebt. Das sind die Spieltätigkeiten. Im Zappeln und Lallen des Säuglings äuszern sich bereits spielend die erst ein Jahr später fällig werdenden Lauf- und Sprechinstinkte; im Kampfspiel der Knaben, im Puppenspiel der Mädchen melden sich die erst Jahrzehnte später fällig werdenden Kampf- und Pflegeinstinkte der Erwachsenen usw. *Jede Spieltendenz ist die Morgendämmerung eines Ernstinstinktes.*

Nun könnte man glauben, dass ein verfrühtes Auftreten gewisser Tätigkeiten nicht nur nicht zweckmässig, sondern geradezu

¹⁾ Es war vor allem Stanley Hall, der auf diese atavistische Bedeutung der Jagd-, Kampf-, Kletter-, Wurf-Spiele aufmerksam gemacht hat.

²⁾ In — zum Teil sehr übertriebener — Weise sucht die Psychoanalyse nachzuweisen, dass in fast allen kindlichen Spielen unbewusste erotische, ja geradezu sexuelle Motive wirksam sind.

zweckwidrig sei. Allein Verfrühung bedeutet zugleich *Vorübung*, und diese erstreckt sich ausnahmslos auf alle Funktionen, die im Leben einmal wertvoll werden können, auf physische wie auf seelische, auf individuelle wie auf soziale, Körperkraft und technische Geschicklichkeit, das Umgehen und Hantieren mit den Dingen, Ausdauer und Geduld, Überlegen und Entscheiden, Raten und Deuten, das Zusammenwirken mit andern zu gemeinsamem Tun — dies und mancherlei anderes übt sich im Spiel.¹⁾

Ermöglicht wird das autodidaktische Moment des Spiels dadurch, das die Übung *an harmlosem Material* vor sich geht; das Spiel verhält sich zum Leben, wie das Manöver zum Kriege. Miszerfolge und Versager, die im Ernstfall den grössten Schaden anrichten würden, sie werden im Spiel erlebt und erlitten ohne jede wirkliche Schädigung, ja mit dem Nutzen, dasz sie durch eine Art Selbstregulierung überwunden werden. Eine so gewonnene Einsicht wird viel organischer als Belehrung durch andere. Durch Schaden wird man klug — auch wenn es ein blosser Spielschaden ist. Der Knabe, der mit seinen Bausteinen spielt, wird zehnmal umsonst versuchen, einen Querbalken auf zwei Säulen zu legen — weil eben die Säulen zu weit voneinander entfernt oder auch verschieden hoch sind; durch Ausprobieren findet er schliesslich die richtigen Säulen und Stellungen, und nun hat er in die Statik der Dinge Einblicke und im Hantieren mit den Dingen Fertigkeiten erworben, die ihm später im praktischen Leben vielfältigen Nutzen bringen werden.

Auch in geistig-sittlicher Hinsicht zeigt sich jene spielmässige Verfrühung der Instinkte. Spielend stellt sich das Kind vor die Aufgabe, Pläne zu entwerfen, Entschlüsse zu fassen, geistesgegenwärtig zu sein, zu befehlen und zu disponieren (man denke an Kampfspiele) — zu einer Zeit, in der sein wirkliches Leben noch ganz in Abhängigkeit und Planlosigkeit verläuft. Im Spiel lernt das Kind schon früh sich der Spielregel fügen, d.h. frei-

¹⁾ Die „Vorübungstheorie“ des Spieles ist namentlich von Karl Gross ausgebildet worden.

willig die Verbindlichkeit eines allgemeinen Gesetzes anerkennen und befolgen — wieviel später gelangt es erst dazu, sein wirkliches Handeln nicht mehr nach persönlichen Autoritäten, sondern nach einem verbindlichen Pflichtgesetz zu richten! So ist das Spielleben des Kindes der wirklichen Entwicklung psychologisch um beträchtliche Strecken voraus. Es ist dies aber natürlich nur dadurch möglich, dass die verfrühten Spielbetätigungen konsequenzlos und darum auch verantwortungslos sind. Nicht das Ergebnis, wie im Ernstfall, sondern die T a t als solche und der im Tun liegende Ü b u n g s w e r t macht die Zukunftsbedeutung des Spieles aus.

Дорогая Юлия Ивановна
поздравляю Вас с новым годом
и желаю всего хорошего. Как
Вы поживаете я здорова только
немножко кашляю. Ваша младшая
сестра она тоже поздравляет Вас
с новым годом и желает всего
хорошего.

Ваша ученица
Наточка Вальтеръ.

*Letter written by a 7-year old pupil of a Montessori School at
St. Petersburg.*

Dear Mrs. Julie, I congratulate you on Natali's birthday, and wish you every happiness. I am very well, only coughing a little. My little sister Sophy congratulates you too; she loves you with all her little heart.

Your pupil,
NATALIE VALTER.



Counting and exercising the touch with
different objects.



Peeling and cutting potatoes.
Children of the Montessori School at Vienna.

realise these powerful impulses, which are of the greatest importance for its life, and which for the time being find an outlet in the shape of harmless games. Hereditary impulses from the past, slumbering in the child since its earliest ancestors, are stirred to life and find expression in the form of play. ¹⁾

In addition to these we have all those impulses and interests operating in the *present* that are continuously bearing a part in all playful activity; the desire for knowledge, for movement, for ornament, the erotic tendencies ²⁾, and so forth. Lastly there is the unborn *future* life, which prophetically casts its shadow before in these games. This will be the subject of the following essay.

The various capacities and accomplishments of man "reach maturity", that is: become essential for life at quite different periods. Now, however, we find that the inner dispositions, which lead to those accomplishments, in their psychical awakening are not connected with this date of maturity, but announce themselves at a much earlier moment. This anticipation appears to be a general law; no psychic function is exempt from it. Instinctively and as a matter of course indications of activities present themselves all at once; for the immediate present they are not at all clearly outlined, but by their very elementary character they often betray the unconscious end to which the individual inclines.

These are the playful activities. In the movements and stammerings of the infant, the instincts of walking and speech, which are not due for development till a year after, find playful utterance. In the fights of the boys, and in the girls' fondness for dolls, the fighting and nursing instincts of the grown-ups, which will not be mature for another score of years announce themselves. Every tendency revealed in play is the awakening of a fundamental instinct.

Now it might be thought that an accelerated appearance of

¹⁾ It was Stanley Hall especially who drew attention to this attavistic importance of the games of hunting, climbing, fighting and throwing.

²⁾ In an exaggerated way Psycho-analysis tries to point out that in nearly all childish games unconscious erotic motives are active.

The Bearing of the Child's Games on its Nature

by

Professor Dr. WILLIAM STERN ¹⁾

University of Hamburg.

The inquiry into the meaning of the games of childhood has over and over again occupied the thinking part of humanity, ever since the days of Rousseau down to our own times. Nowadays we know that a great many causes combine to show the important part that the games of childhood play in human life.

On the one hand we find the details of its environment always operating on the child-mind, and these are assimilated in its play and are incorporated in its mental equipment without any effort; this is the result of the untiring instinct for imitation. In consequence of this imitation the dwelling-place of the child, the profession of its father, the periodical change of season, together with stirring events of the time, find their reflection in the child's games. The child of the mountains plays at hunting and smuggling, the child of the waterside at steamers and fishing. In a spot where an airman is seen for the first time, this sensation is sure to be enacted for weeks together in the games of the children. When playing at soldiers, the opposing armies were called "Russians and Japs" at one time, "Germans and English" now; — thus even the history of the world throws its shadow into the playgrounds.

On the other hand, however — and these are the more important — there are the *absolutely original instincts*, operating within the child, which induce it to play. The child itself does not

¹⁾ The text of the essay is for the greater part taken from the recently published work: W. Stern, *Psychology of early Infancy*. 3rd revised and enlarged edition. Leipzig. u. Mayer 1923.

certain activities, so far from being beneficial, would be injurious. But then — this acceleration implies preliminary training, and this embraces without exception all the functions which may at one time become of value in life, physical as well as psychical, individual as well as social. Bodily strength and technical skill, the handling of objects, staying power and patience, deliberation and decision, advising and explaining, co-operating with others for a common purpose, all these, in addition to much that has not been mentioned, are exercised in play. ¹⁾

The auto-didactic element in games is rendered possible of attainment, because the activities are exercised on harmless material; games are to life what the manoeuvres are to the battle. Failures and disappointments, which in real life would cause the greatest harm, are experienced and borne in fun without occasioning any real injury; nay, they are useful, for they call into play a sort of self-regulation.

Knowledge thus gained becomes more organic than what is taught by others. Bought knowledge is best, even if it is bought in this sportive manner.

A boy playing with building-bricks will try ten times in vain to put a cross-beam on two pillars, because they happen to be too far from each other or of unequal height; by experimenting he finds eventually the proper pillars and positions and has thus acquired an insight into the statics of objects and the skill in handling them, which afterwards will be frequently of practical use to him in life.

Also in intellectual matters is this precociousness of the instincts revealed. In play the child attempts to design plans, to make decisions, to display presence of mind, to order and to dispose (think of the war-games), at a time when its real life still moves entirely in dependence upon others and without any prearranged plans.

In play the child learns at an early age to accommodate itself to the rules of the game, i.e. voluntarily to acknowledge and

¹⁾ The "preliminary training theory" of games was especially outlined by Karl Gross.

obey the binding force of a general law. Just think of the number of years that will have to elapse before he reaches the stage of regulating his conduct in real life, not by the authority of individuals, but according to the dictates of the law of duty. Thus, psychologically, the game-life of the child is considerably ahead of its real development. It stands to reason, however, that this is possible only because the precocious activities have no consequences and are therefore irresponsible. Not the result, as is the case in real life, but the activity as such and its value as an exercise, constitute the importance of the relation of the game to the future.

From a pedagogical point of view these considerations are important for two reasons.

In the first place they show that every game trains and educates the child and especially perhaps those which are not offered to the child for that purpose. Thus the exclusion of certain possible and really spontaneous activities from the games in children's homes and infants' schools, merely because their immediate usefulness from one day to the other cannot be determined, is unjustifiable.

In the second place it appears that a high value should be attached to the games of childhood with respect to *characterological prognosis*.

The difference in psychical disposition between one human being and the other indeed becomes first apparent in play, for the very reason that it is the prototype of the future development of the individual. Whereas the *real* life of the first year is strongly influenced by the levelling tendencies of baby-life in general, in its games we get a foretaste of the distinguishing features of the character which is still in statu nascendi, of its intellectual tendencies etc. One child plays energetically and for a long time at a stretch, another is lax and fitful; in social games one child immediately sets up for the leader, rules and orders his playmates about as a matter of course, whereas the next allows himself to be led, shows little initiative and joins in as one of the herd. Sometimes the art of imitation is merely slavish, stick-

ing rigidly to its pattern, in the case of others it is self-expressive, an independent development and transformation of the original. Are not all these individual features of the adult-that-is-to-be, prematurely revealing themselves?

It must indeed be fascinating to watch children at play and from this be able to prognosticate the future development of their characters and minds. Though we are certainly liable to make considerable mistakes, there is no other sphere of child-life so full of meaning for the future as its games.

Here we find a psychological task for the kindergarten, not recognised as yet. It will have to outline character-charts of its pupils from their behaviour when at play; from these the home, the school, and even those called upon to give advice in the matter of the choice of a profession, will get hints which will enable them better to understand, treat and advise the young. But, of course, a thorough training in psychological observation and interpretation, which is generally lacking nowadays, will be required for this.

Ueber Intelligenz und Intelligenzprüfung

Theoretische Bemerkungen zu Problemen der angewandten Psychologie.

von

OTTO LIPMANN.

Das Problem, den Grad der Intelligenz eines Wesens, — sei es Mensch oder Tier — zu bestimmen, steht schon seit vielen Jahren in Mittelpunkt des Interesses sowohl der Tierpsychologie wie der angewandten Psychologie. Die Tierpsychologie wurde zu diesem Problem geführt im Zusammenhange mit der Frage, ob die psychische Entwicklungshöhe einer Tierart der Stellung entspricht, die diese Art auf Grund ihrer biologischen Beschaffenheit in der Tierreihe einnimmt, ob z. B. die Menschenaffen sich auch hinsichtlich ihrer Intelligenz als dem Menschen verwandt erweisen. Eine andere Frage war die, ob die Domestikation d.h. die Zähmung auch in Bezug auf die Intelligenz Degenerationserscheinungen bewirkt.

Unter den Anwendungsgebieten der Psychologie, die es mit dem Intelligenzproblem zu tun haben, steht in vor-derster Reihe die Psychiatrie und Neurologie. Das Problem der Erkennung des jugendlichen Schwachsinn, die Frage, ob und inwieweit psychische und nervöse Erkrankungen die Intelligenz herabsetzen, führten sehr bald zu Methoden der Intelligenzprüfung. Handelte es sich hier um die Feststellung *unternormaler* Intelligenzgrade, so ergab in neuerer Zeit die Bewegung, die Notwendigkeit, auch *übernormale* Grade der Intelligenz zu erkennen. Die Einheitsschulbewegung legte dann auch den Gedanken nahe, zu untersuchen, wie die Intelligenzen sich innerhalb der Breite des Normalen differenzieren, ob z. B. Intelligenzunterschiede zwischen den Angehörigen verschiedener sozialer Schichten bestehen. Im Zusammenhang mit dem Koedukationsproblem

steht die Frage des Intelligenzunterschiedes zwischen den Geschlechtern. Verschiedene Berufe stellen verschiedene Anforderungen an die Intelligenz, und daher wird die Intelligenz auch bei Berufseignungsdiagnosen berücksichtigt. Und endlich ist hier auch noch der Vergleich der Angehörigen verschiedener Rassen und Nationen in Bezug auf ihre Intelligenz zu erwähnen, was auch praktisch z. B. zu gewissen Massnahmen der amerikanischen Einwanderungsbehörden geführt hat.

Die Methodik der Feststellung des Intelligenzgrades eines Menschen oder menschlichen Individuums hat meist davon abgesehen, der zu verwendenden Methode eine Definition der Intelligenz zu Grunde zu legen, oder sie hat sich mit einer provisorischen Definition begnügt. Als Begründung für diesen Standpunkt hat man sich meist mit dem Hinweise begnügt, dass man auch z. B. die Elektrizität messen könne, ohne Genaueres über das Wesen der Elektrizität zu wissen. Ueber die Zulässigkeit dieser Resignation zu streiten, ist hier nicht der Ort. Immerhin liegt doch den meisten Intelligenzfeststellungsmethoden implicite irgend ein Begriff davon, was Intelligenz eigentlich sei, zu Grunde, und wir werden im Folgenden sehen, wie auch dieser Begriff sich im Laufe der Zeiten gewandelt hat.

Die ältesten Methoden der Feststellung, sei es der tierischen, sei es der menschlichen Intelligenz, haben es mit dem *Gedächtnis* zu tun. Die Labyrinthversuche der Tierpsychologie identifizieren die Intelligenz mit der Fähigkeit, Erfahrungen zu machen und diese Erfahrungen fernerhin zu benutzen. Es handelt sich dabei darum, dass das Tier durch „Versuch und Irrtum“ sich selbst darauf dressiert, den gradesten Ausweg aus einem Labyrinth zu finden oder in analoger Weise einen kompliziert verschlossenen Kasten zu öffnen (Thorndike) od. dgl.

Auch der Intelligenzbegriff, der den ersten für psychiatrische Zwecke verwandten Intelligenzprüfungen zu Grunde lag, ist, wie gesagt, dem Begriff des Gedächtnisses nahe verwandt: Die grundlegende Methode war hier die Methode der Prüfung des

Wissens (Kenntnisprüfung), die meist darauf hinauslief, den Grad der „Allgemeinen Bildung“ des Patienten festzustellen. Erst als sich zeigte (Rodenwaldt, Lange u. a.), dass keineswegs auch alle diejenigen Personen, an deren normaler Intelligenz zu zweifeln kein Anlass vorlag, das vorausgesetzte Mass an Schulkenntnissen sich ins spätere Leben hinein bewahrten, fing man an, Schlüsse auf Intelligenzedefekte nur noch aus Defekten der speziellen *beruflichen* Bildung des Patienten abzuleiten.

Ein weiterer Schritt war der, dass man erkannte, dass die Lernfähigkeit, die Merkfähigkeit, das Gedächtnis nur eines der Gebiete darstellen, in denen die Intelligenz sich betätigt, und dass es andere psychische Funktionen gibt, in denen die Intelligenz sich reiner betätigen kann, in denen andere psychische Fähigkeiten weniger das Ergebnis beeinflussen können. Es gibt in der Tat wohl keine einzige psychische Funktion, die nicht gelegentlich auch für die Intelligenzprüfungsmethodik verwendet worden ist: Unterschiedsempfindlichkeit, Aufmerksamkeit, Kombinationsfähigkeit (Ebbinghaus), die Fähigkeit logische Schlüsse zu ziehen (Schüssler), Ordnungen herzustellen (W. Stern), das Prinzip einer Anordnung zu erkennen (Révész) usw. usw.

Aber es ist ein ¹Unterschied, ob man definiert: „Intelligenz ist Kombinationsfähigkeit“ oder ob man konstatiert: „Die Intelligenz betätigt sich u. a. *auch* im Kombinieren“.

Diese Erkenntnis, dass die Intelligenz überhaupt keine Funktion ist, die direkt erfasst werden kann, dass bei jeder psychischen Fähigkeit wenigstens zwei Faktoren in Frage kommen (Spearman), ein spezifischer und ein allgemeiner — letzterer eben „general intelligence“ genannt — liegt einem weiteren Fortschritt der Intelligenzfeststellungsmethodik zu Grunde:

Man verzichtete darauf, die Intelligenz durch *eine* Feststellung erfassen zu wollen, untersuchte nun eine ganze Reihe von möglichst heterogenen psychischen Funktionen und betrachtete als Massstab für die Intelligenz etwa die durchschnittliche Leistungsfähigkeit in allen diesen Betätigungen (Binet-Simon).

Gleichzeitig mit dieser Entwicklungsphase der Intelligenzprüfungsmethodik und im Zusammenhange mit der eben er-

wähnten Erkenntnis bildete sich eine Methodik aus, die auf experimentelle Feststellungen verzichtete, und diese durch die Ergebnisse von Beobachtungen ersetzte bzw. ergänzte. Was das Ergebnis betrifft, so kann man diese Methodik im Gegensatze zu derjenigen der Intelligenzschätzung bezeichnen (W. Stern).

Die eben geschilderten Methoden der Intelligenzfeststellung sind grösstenteils Methoden der angewandten Psychologie, die den oben geschilderten praktischen Zwecken, oder dem einen oder dem anderen dieser Zwecke dienstbar gemacht werden. Aber einige dieser Methoden, so z. B. die Frage, ob das geprüfte Individuum das Prinzip einer Anordnung erkennen kann, sind auch bei tierpsychologischen Experimenten verwendet worden.

Hier ist eine Verirrung der tierpsychologischen Methodik zu erwähnen: Aus Lernfähigkeit und Kenntnissen von „klugen Pferden“, „sprechenden Hunden“, „rechnenden Schimpansen“ u. dgl. glaubten viele auf eine überraschend hohe Intelligenz dieser Tiere schliessen zu müssen. Abgesehen davon, dass schon die Methodik dieser Feststellungen nicht einwandfrei war (und gelegentlich auch ad absurdum geführt wurde) (Pfungst), hätte schon der Umstand stutzig machen müssen, dass die bei diesen Tieren vermeintlich nachgewiesenen Kenntnisse ohne jegliche biologische Bedeutung für das Tier sind, und dass ein solches „kluges“ Tier niemals auch den geringsten Versuch machte, seine Kenntnisse praktisch zu verwerten.

In gewissem Sinne war dies bis vor kurzem kennzeichnend für die *gesamte* Intelligenzprüfungsmethodik, — das man sich nämlich damit begnügte, festzustellen, ob der Prüfling die Funktionen besitze, Sachverhalte zu *erkennen*. Dass es neben dem intelligenten Erkennen auch ein intelligentes *Handeln* gibt, das mehr ist als blosses Symptom für eine Erkenntnis, die ihm vorangegangen ist, — dies Erkenntnis ist der Inhalt der neuesten Phase der Intelligenzprüfungstechnik. Sie wurde zuerst bei Untersuchungen an Affen (Köhler, Yerkes) und neuerdings auch bei Prüfungen von normalen und schwachsinnigen Kindern verwendet, nachdem einige weniger systematische Versuche schon vorher auch an normalen und schwachsinnigen Erwachsenen

veranstaltet worden waren (E. Stern). Nähere Ausführungen über die Technik dieser Versuche und über den Begriff des „intelligenten Handelns“ möchte ich mir durch den Hinweis auf das soeben veröffentlichte Buch „Naive Physik“ (Arbeiten aus dem Institut für angewandte Psychologie. Theoretische und experimentelle Untersuchungen über die Fähigkeit des intelligenten Handelns. Von Otto Lipmann und Hellmuth Bogen; Leipzig, Johann Ambrosius Barth 1923) ersparen.

Die Ergebnisse dieser Untersuchung weisen in folgender Richtung. Es gibt nicht *eine*, alle Funktionen des Erkennens und des Handelns beherrschende Intelligenz, sondern es gibt *Intelligenzen* in dem Sinne, das bei einem und demselben Individuum die eine Intelligenz gut, und gleichzeitig eine andere Intelligenz schwach entwickelt sein kann; mit anderen Worten: es gibt einen Schwachsinn des Erkennens und einen Schwachsinn des Handelns, die nicht notwendig zusammen auftreten müssen. Das allen intelligenten Betätigungen gemeinsame ist nicht eine spezifische Eigenschaft der Seele, eine Intelligenz, sondern eine gewisse Form des *Verhaltens*, die aber, wie gesagt, bei demselben Individuum gewissen Anforderungen gegenüber vorhanden sein, bei anderen aber fehlen kann. Für die Technik der Intelligenzfeststellung ergibt sich daraus die Forderung, dass man in Zukunft weniger Wert darauf zu legen hat, den *Intelligenzgrad* eines Individuums zu *messen* (denn die verschiedenen Intelligenzen eines Individuums haben verschiedene Grade), als darauf, den *Intelligenztypus* dieses Individuums festzustellen, d. h. bestimmen, welche seinen Intelligenzen am besten, welche am schlechtesten usw. entwickelt sei. Dies erscheint sowohl für die Schule, für die Didaktik, für die freie Erziehung wie auch für die psychiatrische Diagnostik und Prognostik von grösster Wichtigkeit, und ebenso vielleicht auch für die Frage des Intelligenzunterschiedes der Geschlechter, der Rassen, der Angehörigen verschiedener sozialer Milieus.

Questions and Answers

(Questions relating to the development of the social life in the School)

Answered bij Prof G. RÉVÉSZ.

Why should children begin attendance at the Montessori School at 3-4 years of age?

Experience in general teaches that children before adolescence tend to hold fast *to their environment, their surroundings, their inborn inclinations, as well as to their acquired habits* under all circumstances. The child does not willingly leave his accustomed surroundings nor change his little habits, but clings to everything that is round him and in him as if it were part of his personality. If the child comes into a new environment he feels strange, forlorn, loses his assurance and his self-confidence. Every change in his environment, as a rule, creates in the child a state of strong tension, and a lessened activity. The change of milieu can create in the child an agreeable sensation only if the *newness* of the environment is compensated by the familiarity of its surroundings (parents, children). The change and variety in life which grown-up persons strive after is thus in sharp contrast to the conservative nature of the child.

Freud and his school go further, for they suggest that the child not merely strives to retain the environment and habits of his infancy and early childhood (as is seen in the action of sucking), but that he is even strongly inclined to return to pre-natal conditions, as is manifested physiologically in the curled-up position, with limbs folded, during sleep.

The conservative principle of child-life, the tenacious clinging to custom (which is the antithesis of the radical-progressive

attitude of youth) explains why the child resists every deed and every tendency which leads to a change of milieu and of habits. The child regards to a certain degree inimically everyone who would over-rule his natural opposition to any real change. That most children in such cases do not resist, but apparently resign themselves to it, does not prove in any way that they are also content with it. On the contrary, the child will invariably try to find an opportunity to remove the disagreeable new situation. If he should not succeed in this and if he is not able to adapt himself to the new requirements, marked psychical disturbances are apt to occur frequently which will be highly prejudicial to his inner life and will lessen his capabilities. This will generally manifest itself in extreme shyness in company, increased abstractedness, loss of self-confidence, etc.

The first *radical change* in the environment and in the customs of the child takes place when, at his 6th. year, he enters the *first class of the Elementary School*. The difference between home and school is so great that this entry into the school generally leads to an arrest in bodily and mental growth which, in the case of weakly children, may have disastrous effects. If we consider that a child who has enjoyed almost complete freedom at home, and who could divide his time and his occupations according to his own desires and the interests of the moment, should suddenly, and without a transition stage, enter the public school, where he has to sit for hours on a form, give his attention to a teacher, hand in his work within a given time, and so on, we shall easily understand the great difficulties which most children encounter in beginning school-life.

To lessen the difficulties and dangers of such a sudden change, the children are sent first to a *Kindergarten School*, which in its entire scope resembles more the nature and tendency of home education. Life in the Kindergarten, by reason of the social nature of the instruction, the getting used to a teacher and to school discipline, as a matter of fact facilitates the transition into the elementary school.

The easy transition of the children from the Kindergarten to the Elementary School, however, is partly precluded by the fact that the child in this preparatory school does not after all get a *real* preparation for the Elementary School: the Elementary School, namely, makes other demands upon the children than those of the Kindergarten, but more especially is its curriculum different and its method of instruction different.

The accustoming to the classical schooling outside the family under the guidance of a teacher, however, does not ensure an easy transition for the children from the Kindergarten into the Elementary School.

In the Montessori System, the preparatory and the elementary instruction are not separate from each other. The preparatory instruction passes, imperceptibly, unbroken and continuous into the elementary education. The child himself does not even notice when he has reached the required stage for elementary instruction, and there is no fixed time at which the child will be initiated into the "higher sciences."

Neither the general educational aims nor the didactic methods change during the period from 3 to 10 or 12 years of age. Nor does the position of the child towards teachers, companions and the school change either. The class-system is gradually relinquished, the old principle of "one class per year" no longer exists. The children work and learn, each at his own rate and according to his own capacity, from the beginning of the school till they leave it, and they absorb all that they will require later for their general mental development.

Since the Montessori pedagogic ideas form one uniform system, one part of which stands in the closest relation to another, it goes without saying that the children must go through the whole program. It is thus as impossible to omit the *preparatory portion* of the Montessori education, which as a rule is between the 3rd. and 6th. year, as it is for a pupil who has not finished the program of the 1st. class to pass direct to the 2nd. class.

One important question is whether those children who have

not attended the Montessori school before their 6th. year make up for this later on, or whether they should on this account be entirely excluded from Montessori education.

If the Montessori program consisted merely of certain *subjects* or of the acquirement of certain intellectual knowledge, such a belated preparation might be possible, although in my opinion any such hasty curtailed preparation seems ill-advised for anyone, especially in childhood's years. The Montessori education, however, does not comprise only certain subjects, it is just in this period of *preparation* that the chief stress is laid upon the *development of the senses, powers of discrimination, of attention and concentration, on the development of spontaneous voluntary action, on the stimulation of interest in manifold subjects, on the cultivation of exact observation and on exact work.* Above all the essential point, as we said, is first of all to develop the functions and capacities which are most essential to the intellectual development which will begin later.

This development, which will be really attained by the independent effort of the children, requires time however. It does not allow itself to be compressed into any short period, for, firstly, the exercises are many and various and, secondly, we may not urge the children to rapid work for that would be in contradiction to the fundamental principles of the Montessori method. And added to this, there is further the experience that children, just between 3—7 years of age, show themselves to be specially receptive to the development of the above-named functions¹⁾. For at a later age, when the inclinations, the will, the interest, together with the attention, begin to be attracted by other subjects, when the turn comes for the development of other mental functions and capacities and especially the assimilation of valuable knowledge, then it will appear that the best time for this unfolding of the elementary functions is past.

If we neglect their training in early life, these fundamental

¹⁾ Dr. Maria Montessori wishes the children to commence school at 3—3½ years of age. Her special motive will, we hope, be discussed by herself in these columns.

functions can only serve in a limited degree as the basis of further mental development.

Between 3 and 7 years of age, therefore, the *foundation* must be laid upon which the further education is to be built up. This preparation is indispensable and it is, as we saw, bound to a certain period in juvenile development.

How far we can deviate in special cases from this age, and how the special development of the child will be formed under these circumstances, is a question which will have to be treated separately in each concrete case.

In most cases great difficulty will be encountered. In practice it seems that the children who have not entered the Montessori School at the proper age will never be able to profit to the full extent by this method.

Warum sollen die Kinder die Montessori Schule schon mit ihrem 3 bis 4 Jahren beginnen?

von

Prof. GÉZA RÉVÉSZ.

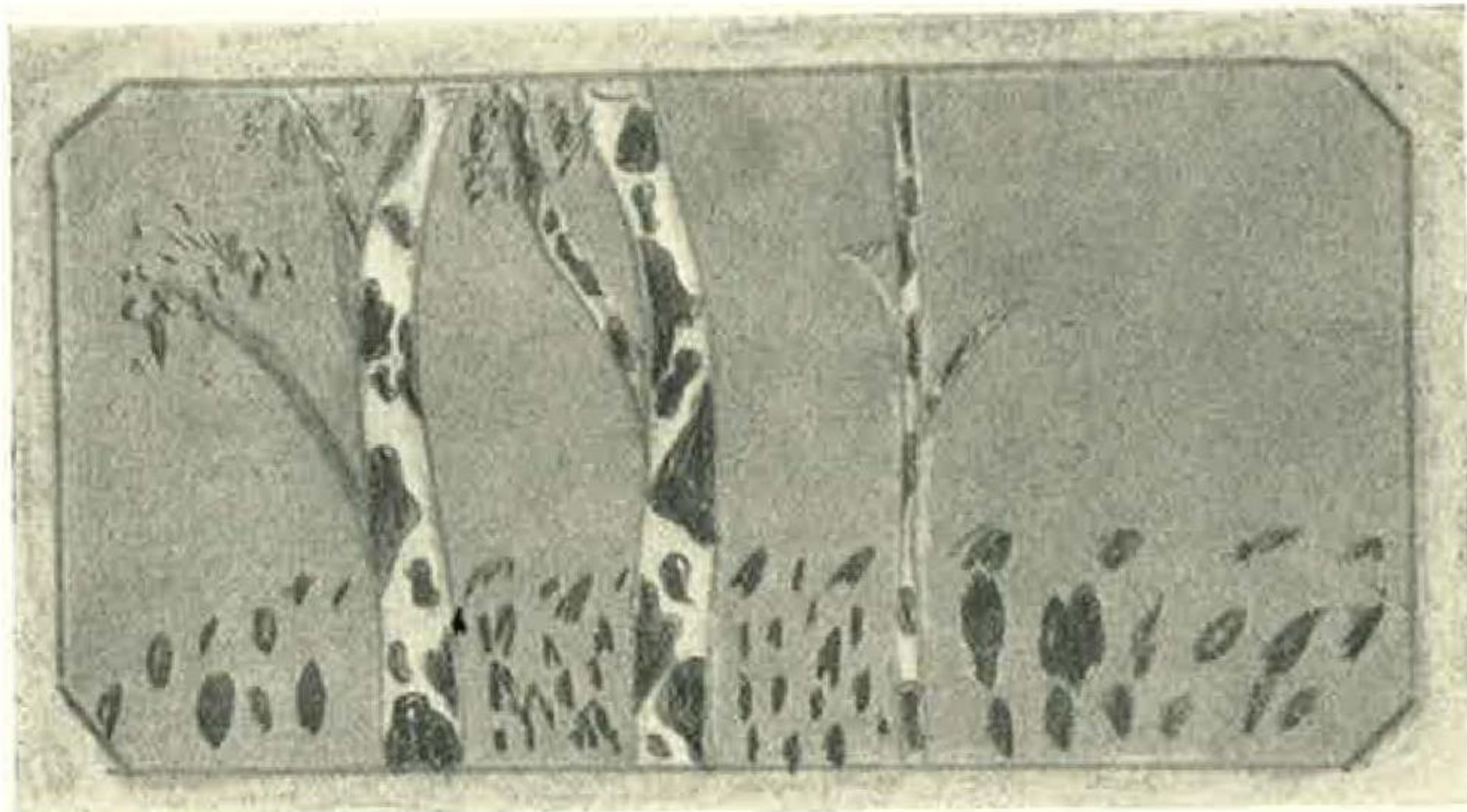
Es ist eine allgemeine Erfahrung, dass Kinder vor ihrer Pubertätsperiode an die Umgebung, an die Umwelt, an ihre angeborenen Neigungen, wie an ihre erworbenen Gewohnheiten unter allen Umständen festhalten wollen. Das Kind will seine gewohnte Umgebung nicht verlassen, seine kleinen Gewohnheiten nicht verändern, es klammert an alles, was um ihn und in ihm ist. Kommt das Kind in eine neue Umgebung, so fühlt es sich fremd, verlassen, verliert seine Sicherheit. Jeder Wechsel der Umgebung löst beim Kind einen Zustand starker Spannung und ein vermindertes Tätigkeitsgefühl aus. Die Milieuänderung kann beim Kind bloss dann einen angenehmen Eindruck erwecken, wenn die *Fremdheit der Umwelt* wenigstens durch die *Vertrautheit der Umgebung* (Eltern, Kinder) kompensiert wird. Das Wechselreiche, das Mannigfaltige, was Erwachsenen im Leben erstreben, steht also im schroffen Gegensatz zu der konservativen Natur des Kindes.

Freud und seine Schule gingen weiter, als sie die Vermutung aufstellten, dass das Kind nicht nur danach strebt, die Umgebung und Gewohnheiten des Säuglingsalters und die der ersten Kindheit zu bewahren, (was z. B. im Lutschen zum Ausdruck kommt), sondern dass es sogar triebhaft den Zustand des intrauterinen Lebens wiedergewinnen will, was sich u. a. in dem zusammengekauerten, die Extremitäten zusammengefalteten Zustand während des Schlafes manifestieren soll.

Das konservative Prinzip des kindlichen Lebens, das triebhafte Festhalten an Gewohnheiten (was den Gegenpol zu dem radikal-



Drawing (from nature) of a stuffed sparrow-hawk.
Done by an 11 year old pupil of the Amsterdam Montessori School.



Drawing done by a child 5¹/₂ years of age attending Montessori School at St. Petersburg.

progressiven Streben des jugendlichen Menschen darstellt), erklärt, warum das Kind gegen jede Handlung, gegen jede Tendenz, das auf einen Wechsel des Milieus und der Lebensgewohnheiten hinzielt, sich sträubt. Das Kind sieht gewissermassen jeden Menschen feindselig an, der seinen natürlichen Widerstand gegen jede wesentliche Aenderung verhindern will. Das die meisten Kinder in solchen Fällen sich nicht auflehnen, sondern die Veränderungen scheinbar ruhig ertragen, beweist noch keinesfalls, dass sie damit auch zufrieden sind. Im Gegenteil, das Kind wird immer trachten, aus der neuen Situation wieder in die alte zu kommen. Gelingt ihm diese Verdrängung nicht, und ist es nicht im Stande sich den neuen Anforderungen anzupassen, so können leicht zeitweilig psychische Störungen auftreten, die sein Gefühlsleben stark beschädigen, seine Leistungsfähigkeit stark vermindern. Dies drückt sich meistens in socialer Angst, hochgradiger Zerstreuung, Mangel an Selbstvertrauen, etc. aus.

Der erste radikale Wechsel in der Umgebung und in den Gewohnheiten des Kindes stellt sich ein, wenn die Kinder nach ihrem 6. Jahren *in die erste Klasse der Elementarschule* eintreten. Der Unterschied zwischen Haus und Schule ist so beträchtlich, dass der Eintritt in die Schule gewöhnlich ein Zurückbleiben des körperlichen und geistigen Wachstums mit sich bringt, was bei schwachen und kränklichen Kindern verhängnissvoll werden kann. Wenn wir berücksichtigen, dass ein Kind, das zu Hause eine fast völlige Bewegungsfreiheit genoss und seine Zeit und Arbeit nach eigenem Wunsch, nach augenblicklichen Interessen einteilen konnte, wenn ein solches Kind plötzlich ohne Uebergang in die öffentliche Schule kommt, stundenlang in einer Bank sitzen, seine Aufmerksamkeit auf einen Lehrer richten, seine Arbeit auf einen bestimmten Termin einliefern muss: so werden wir die grossen Schwierigkeiten, die den meisten Kindern beim Schulbeginn entgegentreten, wohl leicht verstehen.

Um die Schwierigkeiten und Gefahren des plötzlichen Ueberganges zu verringern, schickt man das Kind zuerst in die „*Fröbel Schule*“, die sich in ihrer ganzen Ausgestaltung mehr an der Art und Tendenz der häuslichen Erziehung anschmiegt. Durch das

Leben in der Fröbelschule wird der Uebergang in der Elementarschule infolge des socialen Unterrichts, durch die Gewöhnung an einen Lehrer und an eine Schuldisciplin in der Tat erleichtert.

Die glatte Ueberführung der Kinder aus der Fröbelschule nach der Elementarschule scheitert einigermassen aber daran, dass das Kind in dieser vorbereitenden Schule, eine *eigentliche Vorbereitung für die Elementarschule* doch nicht gewinnt. Die Elementarschule stellt nämlich lediglich andere Anforderungen an die Kinder als die Fröbelschule; aber vor allem verschieden ist ihr Lehrprogramm und verschieden ihre Unterrichtsmethode. Die Gewöhnung an die gemeinsame Schulung, ausserhalb der Familie, unter Leitung eines Lehrers sichert, infolge der bestehenden Verschiedenheit in den Fächern und in der Methode, die Ueberführung der Kinder noch nicht.

Im Montessori-System ist vorbereitende und elementare Unterricht voneinander nicht geschieden. Die vorbereitende Unterweisung geht unbemerkt, lückenlos, kontinuierlich in die elementare Ausbildung über. Das Kind bemerkt selbst nicht, wann es nun die Vorbedingungen für den elementaren Unterricht erreicht hat, und es besteht kein fixer Zeitpunkt, von wo aus das Kind in die „höheren Wissenschaften“ eingeführt werden soll. Weder die allgemeinen erzieherischen Ziele, noch die didaktischen Methoden ändern sich während der Lebensperiode von 3 bis 10, bzw. 12 Jahre. Die Stellung des Kindes gegenüber den Lehrern, Kameraden, und Schule macht *keine Veränderung* durch. Das Klassensystem ist durchwegs aufgehoben. Das alte Prinzip, „*eine Klasse, ein Jahr*“, besteht nicht mehr. Die Kinder arbeiten, lernen, jedes nach seinem Tempo, und nach seiner Leistungsfähigkeit vom Eintreten in die Schule bis zum Abgang, und eignen sich all das an, was zu ihrer allgemeinen geistigen Ausbildung erforderlich ist.

Da die paedagogischen Gedanken Montessoris ein einheitliches System darstellen, dessen Einzelteile miteinander in engster Beziehung stehen, ist es selbstverständlich, dass die Kinder das ganze Programm durchlaufen müssen. Es ist also ebenso unmöglich, *den vorbereitenden Teil* des Montessori Unterrichtes,

der in der Regel zwischen 3 bis 6 Lebensjahren abläuft, zu versäumen, wie es unmöglich ist, einen Schüler, ohne Absolvierung des Programms der I-ten Klasse direct in die II-te Klasse zu versetzen.

Eine besondere Frage ist es, ob es solche Kinder, die die Montessori Schule vor ihren 6. Lebensjahren zu besuchen versäumt haben, das Versäumte noch später nachholen können, oder ob sie infolgedessen gänzlich von dem Montessori-Unterricht auszuschliessen sind?

Wenn das Montessori-Programm sich nur auf Erwerbung gewisser Kenntnisse beziehen würde, so wäre eine solche nachträgliche Vorbereitung möglich, obgleich jede rapide, *verkürzte* Ausbildung vor allem in den kindlichen Jahren sehr gewagt erscheint. Die Montessori Erziehung beschränkt sich aber nicht auf gewisse Lehrfächer, und gerade in der vorbereitenden Periode wird das Gewicht vorzugsweise auf die Ausbildung der Sinne, der Concentration, auf die Entwicklung der spontanen Handlung, des Ordnungssinnes, auf des Erwecken des Interesses, auf die Bildung exakter Beobachtung und exakter Arbeit gelegt. Es kommt also vor allem darauf an, zunächst die *Funktionen und elementaren Fähigkeiten* zu entwickeln, die für die später einsetzende intellektuelle Ausbildung von grösster Bedeutung sind. Diese Ausbildung, die eigentlich durch die selbsttätige Arbeit der Kinder erreicht werden soll, braucht aber Zeit. Es lässt sich nicht auf eine beliebige kurze Zeit zusammendrängen, denn erstens sind die Aufgaben mannigfaltig, zweitens dürfen wir die Kinder nicht zu einer schnelleren Arbeit drängen, denn das würde mit einem der Grundprincipien der Geisteshygiene im Widerspruch stehen. Und dazu kommt noch die Erfahrung, dass Kinder gerade zwischen 3 bis 7 Jahren für die Ausbildung der genannten Funktionen sich ganz besonders empfänglich zeigen. Denn in einer späteren Lebensperiode, wo das Interesse sich auf andere Gegenstände richtet, wo allmählich die Reihe auf Ausbildung anderer Geistesfunktionen und besonders auf Aneignung von Kenntnissen kommt, scheint die günstigste Zeit für die elementaren Funktionen vorüber zu sein. Versäumen wir ihre Schulung in der Kindheit, dann können

diese grundlegenden Funktionen zur Basis der weiteren geistigen Entwicklung nicht im gewünschten Masse dienen.

In der Periode von 3—7 Lebensjahren muss also jenes *Fundament* gelegt werden, worauf sich dann der weitere Unterricht aufbaut. Diese Vorbereitung ist unumgänglich und sie ist — wie wir sehen — an einer bestimmten Periode der kindlichen Entwicklung gebunden.

Wie weit man von diesem Zeitintervall in besonderen Fällen dennoch abweichen kann, und wie sich unter diesen Umständen die spezielle Ausbildung des Kindes gestalten soll, ist eine Frage, worüber wir nur in konkreten Fällen entscheiden können. Die Praxis schient mehr die Ansicht zu rechtfertigen, das Kinder, die in die Montessori-Schule nicht zu dem geeigneten Zeitpunkt eintraten, die besondere Vorteile dieser Methode niemals in vollem Masse geniessen werden können.

Some observations of a Father on the Development of his Daughter.

Dora went to the Montessori School at the age of 3 years and 3 months.

When she was 3 years and 6 months I find the following entry in my diary :

Dora was in bed for a fortnight and while in her cot she drew from memory the dining-room clock. All the figures, including a difficult 4 and 5, were formed correctly. When she came downstairs again we were struck by her going and standing in front of the clock for a considerable time to see if her drawing had been correct.

The Montessori School aims at teaching the children to put every object to the use for which it is intended, and that there should be a place for everything.

Dora puts these lessons into practice whenever she goes to visit her grandparents. "Where is the peg to hang my coat on?" she will ask. And if she has finished with a book or a game, she will ask her Grandmother: "Where shall I put this?"

Further the children are taught to handle objects with care. Once Dora broke the pretty cup I use at breakfast. Instead of crying, she said: "I wasn't careful enough", quite calmly and without fear of a scolding, which of course she did not get.

When she reached the age of 4 years and 8 months, I find the entry in my diary: "She can write many words. When the clock was put an hour forward for "summer time", she observed: "We have slept an hour less".

Her sense of exactitude is sometimes a little trying to a parent, as for instance, when she was 5 years and 8 months, I was with her in the tram on a fine February day. "Father, have you a lot of money?" she asked in her clear voice, "I've

got two hundred and seventy-five cents. First I had twenty cents and then I got twenty-five, that made forty-five cents, and then I got fifty cents more and that made a hundred and twenty-five cents and then I got thirty-five more and now I have altogether a hundred and seventy-five. How much have you?" The calculation was not quite right, but it was not bad for her age. As I did not care to proclaim the state of my finances in a tram full of people, I tried to get out of the difficulty by saying: "What a fine day it is. It is quite summer!" "No", said Dora "First Spring, then Summer".

My little daughter learned very young to deduce general rules from occurrences which repeat themselves. Thus if she is ill, she will cry only if suffering severe pain, such as ear-ache for example, but not in cases of slight illness, even if she feels unwell. In such cases she reasons to herself thus: "I am ill just now, so I must have this tiresome feeling". She has said too: "I am not cross if I am tired, but only if I don't know that I am tired!"

And many other splendid results of the Montessori training in the school do we see in our home, among others those of the grammar lessons with the "tasks". If Dora is told to do something, she will never ask: "What did you say", or require to be told several times. "Just run upstairs and fetch my book; it is lying on the window-sill at the right hand side, behind the curtain". "Oh", she will say. She may grumble a little bit, perhaps, about having to climb the stairs, but she will never ask: where is the book lying, but will come straight back with it.

As an example of her powers of concentration, I may mention the following instance: When Dora was 6 years old, she got a little poem of two verses of four lines each to learn by heart. She looked at it with close attention. "Can you read it"? asked her mother, "shall we write it over for you?" "I can say it already", she replied.

Some people think that Montessori children will become precocious and grown-up before their time, but in my opinion just the contrary is the case. Our little daughter is very intel-

ligent, but lives entirely her own child-life. She does not listen to the conversations of older people, but is engrossed in her childish games and occupations, and goes eagerly to school. In after years she will probably recall little of her childhood except the remembrance of its having been a happy time.

And one thing has been clearly borne in upon me of recent years, namely, that the child must be allowed to develop without being expressly "educated" by the parents. The latter must forbear to do this as much as possible, must exercise self-control, and thus be examples. For the rest, they must leave the child-soul to unfold quietly and in peace, watching it the while as one watches a flower that opens, with reverence, admiration and gratitude.

Les „Asili d'Infanzia" au Tessin (Suisse)

par

LOUISE BRIOD.

Quand on parle d'appliquer la méthode Montessori à l'école officielle, on risque fort de passer pour anarchiste. Arrêter les rouages d'une organisation plus que séculaire et les faire tourner en sens inverse, ce n'est pas une sinécure, et cela ne se fait pas en un jour. Il faut du courage, de la persévérance, de la patience, du tact aussi pour ne pas froisser les susceptibilités et risquer ainsi de compromettre ou de retarder le progrès de la réforme. Il faut encore et surtout la foi solide dans l'idéal que l'on s'est proposé.

Au Tessin, c'était M^{lle} Teresa Bontempi, inspectrice des écoles enfantines, qui s'est montrée capable de résoudre ce problème. Après avoir visité les Case dei Bambini de Rome, et suivi un cours de M^{me} Dr. Montessori à Città di Castello en Ombrie, M^{lle} Bontempi a proposé l'introduction de la méthode dans toutes les écoles enfantines tessinoises; il y a de cela plus de douze ans déjà. Et je me demande s'il existe un autre endroit au monde où la méthode Montessori ait été ainsi reconnue méthode officielle.

M^{lle} Bontempi initia elle-même les premières maîtresses. Quant à l'organisation extérieure des Case dei Bambini, elle ne pouvait être la même au Tessin, pays agricole, que dans les grandes agglomérations urbaines d'Italie. L'essentiel était d'adopter les principes et l'esprit de la méthode Montessori.

Le matériel, le mobilier, très coûteux pour quelques petites écoles à se procurer, ne purent être acquis partout à la fois. Plus d'une commune s'est ingéniée à faire fabriquer elle-même une partie du matériel, parce que pendant la guerre on ne pouvait pas obtenir le matériel à des conditions abordables.

Beaucoup de maîtresses ont travaillé aussi à enrichir la petite collection mise à leur disposition. La bonne volonté de tous aidant, on arriva à faire triompher un peu partout l'idée de la maison des petits, aménagée pour eux, indépendante de l'école des plus grands. Et c'est maintenant au nombre de quatre-vingt-quinze que se comptent ces charmants Asili d'Infanzia.¹⁾

Quelques-uns sont encore bien pauvres, et ont élu domicile dans une chambre d'une maison du village, mais avec le temps les deniers viendront pour construire la maisonnette. Mais que de palais aussi! Je pense ici à l'Asilo de Mendrisio, bâti un peu au-dessus de la gare, dans un site merveilleux, abrité d'un côté par un amphithéâtre de montagnes, et dominant les collines et les vallées qui descendent vers la plaine lombarde. Cet Asilo a eu des parrains généreux qui ont permis de s'installer d'une façon tout à fait princière. Rien n'y manque: le hall immense, les salles spacieuses, le réfectoire, la cuisine avec installation moderne au gaz, la chambre de bains, la belle terrasse où les enfants vont s'ébattre. Sa situation à l'écart de la grand'route, un peu en dehors de la ville, lui assure la tranquillité et l'air salubre pour les petits qui lui sont confiés.

Je pense aussi à l'Asilo de Solduno qui ouvre ses fenêtres sur le magnifique panorama du Lac Majeur. Et tant d'autres encore de ces maisons coquettes, au milieu de leur jardin fleuri, où accourent chaque matin une troupe de joyeux bambins pleins de vie et de santé. Dans presque toutes les vallées, sur les rives du lac de Lugano et du Lac Majeur, auprès du village groupé autour de son gracieux campanile, comme dans les villes, on a su faire une place pour les tout petits, afin qu'ils puissent s'épanouir librement à l'air pur et au soleil, loin des dangers de la rue ou de l'abandon où ils sont souvent laissés.

Beaucoup de parents commencent à comprendre ce que

¹⁾ A l'heure qu'il est ce nombre est dépassé, car un peu partout on se rend compte des bienfaits de cette institution, et nul ne veut rester en arrière, de sorte que maintenant toutes les écoles enfantines Tessinoises sont Montessoriennes.

l'Asilo a fait pour leurs petits. Plus d'une mère qui a vu dans quelle atmosphère paisible, dans quel milieu d'ordre et de propreté on élevait son enfant, n'ose plus lui offrir un intérieur désagréable où retentissent les cris, les gronderies, les disputes.

Pour préciser mieux l'œuvre d'éducation, autant que d'instruction, poursuivie par les Asili d'Infanzio, je me permettrai de pénétrer dans la vie intime de l'un d'entre eux.

Il faudrait être peintre, poète ou écrivain de talent pour rendre tout le charme de la vie d'une maison des petits, transportée dans le cadre champêtre de Caneggio, au sein d'une population tout à fait rustique. Cet Asilo a été confié à une des premières élèves de M^{lle} Bontempi. M^{lle} Assunta Durini.

C'est avec un plaisir toujours renouvelé que je fais chaque année un pèlerinage à travers cette vallée de Muggio, si pittoresque et si riante sous son ciel du Midi, pour arriver à Caneggio, appuyé au flanc de la montagne, et dont les maisons se groupent serrées autour de son beau campanile.

Tout dort, semble-t-il, dans l'Asilo situé un peu au-dessous du village. J'ai traversé le jardin fleuri qui entoure la maisonnette et suis entrée dans le vestibule où les petits ont laissé leurs effets, et où sont alignés le long d'un paroi leurs minuscules zoccoli, dont quelques-uns ont l'air déjà bien fatigués.

J'ouvre la porte de la salle dans laquelle entrent à flots l'air pur et la lumière. Partout des fleurs : sur les fenêtres, sur les armoires, sur le poêle, sur la table de la maîtresse, sur toutes les petites tables des enfants. Dans un angle de la pièce une cage où chantent deux canaries. Et là, parmi les oiseaux et les fleurs, une vingtaine de petits garçons et fillettes sont en train de lire, d'écrire, de dessiner et de travailler avec le matériel sensoriel. Comme ils ont l'air heureux !

Mais ils s'aperçoivent que quelqu'un est entré, et ils quittent tout pour venir m'offrir une chaise, me demander comment je vais, etc. Puis, quand ils me voient bien installée, ils retournent à leur travail. Ils n'y restent pas toute la matinée car ils sont propriétaires non seulement d'une belle maison, les petits enfants de Caneggio, mais aussi d'un grand jardin qui leur

donne beaucoup à faire. Alors, les uns après les autres, ils sortent, chaussent leurs petites semelles de bois et se dispersent parmi les fleurs. Il faudrait être partout à la fois pour voir et pour entendre tout ce que leur disent les arbres et les fleurs, les insectes et les oiseaux. Alors que l'on est porté à croire que la nature n'invite les enfants libres qu'à folâtrer, à cueillir des fleurs ou à tourmenter les animaux, je fus très frappée de l'attitude des enfants de Caneggio, de cette discipline intérieure qui caractérise les petits montessoriens, de leur calme, de leur sensibilité, de la finesse de leurs observations, et je ne pus résister au désir de décrire quelques-unes des scènes dont je fus témoin.

Je n'oublierai jamais la petite Martina, âgée d'à peine quatre ans, assise par terre, près d'un superbe pot de géranium, admirant les magnifiques bouquets de fleurs écarlates dont il était couvert. Elle avait l'air d'entendre quelque chose de très doux qui la faisait sourire un peu. Puis de sa petite main potelée elle caressa légèrement les beaux pétales veloutés, et avant de partir déposa un baiser sur les belles fleurs qu'elle ne quittait qu'à regret.

Je vois encore un autre groupe de petits, entourant un splendide lys martagon qui s'était ouvert le matin même. Aucun d'eux ne le toucha, ils étaient là presque en adoration, retenant leur souffle, pour ne pas ternir l'éclat de la fleur merveilleuse.

C'est que les enfants de Caneggio cultivent eux-mêmes leur jardin, avec l'aide de leur maîtresse naturellement. Ils en connaissent chaque plante, savent vous dire le nom de toutes les fleurs, en suivent le développement jour après jour, et signalent avec joie chaque progrès, chaque transformation.

Les exclamations d'un des petits ont attiré tous les autres autour d'un grand carré de fraises. Comme elles sont rouges et parfumées ! Mais personne n'y touche : ils les cueilleront le lendemain, et inviteront pour les manger les enfants de l'Asilo de Bruzella qui n'ont pas de jardin.

Et puis chacun veut faire voir son petit jardin à lui, maintenant que nous avons bien vu ce qui était la propriété de tous. Le long du mur supérieur de l'enclos sont les petits carrés où chacun a mis ce qui lui plaisait, et où il peut cueillir tout ce

qu'il veut. Attennio désire que je vienne voir la belle touffe de cyclamens dans le jardin de Luciano. „S'il était là, il te les donnerait," me dit-il. Cela veut donc dire qu'on ne touche pas aux fleurs des absents. Plus loin, il faut admirer encore le jardinet tout planté de flochs roses. „C'est celui du pauvre Luigino," ajoute Attennio. Et rien de plus. Le petit groupe qui m'accompagne reste là, sans rien dire. Je comprends que Luigino est mort et ses fleurs sont là, témoins vivants de la petite âme qui s'est envolée dans un autre jardin d'enfants. Et bien sûr à ces fleurs là, on ne touche pas non plus. Tant de délicatesse chez des enfants de cet âge prouve combien est immense et profonde l'œuvre accomplie par une maîtresse qui a su appliquer comme elle doit l'être cette méthode qui permet de développer à un si haut degré la sensibilité de l'enfant.

Je croyais avoir tout vu dans ce jardin, mais mes petits compagnons me révèlent encore tout un monde d'insectes que je n'avait pas soupçonné le long du mur de la maison, entre les pierres du pavé. Les toiles d'araignée font leur admiration, et il faut voir avec quel respect ils entourent ce petit monde de travailleurs à fil et à huit pattes. Là, le proverbe : „cet âge est sans pitié" n'aurait pas eu sa place !

Candida veut encore me conduire sous le préau couvert. Elle s'avance tout doucement vers le clapier, qu'elle ouvre avec précaution, et me montre une belle mère lapin qui a des petits nés de la veille. „Ils sont là, tout au fond, dans les poils," me souffle Candida à l'oreille. Puis doucement, tout doucement, elle referme la porte et se retire sur la pointe des pieds, en me faisant signe de l'imiter.

C'est ainsi que les enfants de Caneggio vivent en harmonie avec la nature. L'Asilo ne les sort pas de leur milieu, qui est celui de la vie champêtre ; seulement, il leur en fait découvrir toutes les beautés, apprécier toutes les ressources, respecter toutes les manifestations.

Comme les conditions de la vie domestique ne sont pas les mêmes pour eux que pour les enfants de la ville, qui reçoivent leur dîner à l'Asilo, ceux de Caneggio rentrent tous chez eux à

midi et reviennent à une heure, pour passer encore l'après-midi dans leur jolie maisonnette. Ils ne goûtent pas longtemps les plaisirs de la table, car beaucoup sont déjà de retour bien avant le moment où leur maîtresse viendra ouvrir la grille de leur charmante propriété.

La voici qui arrive, leur bonne Signorina. Alors les enfants vont chercher des petits bancs pour s'asseoir sous la tournelle couverte de vigne, et là, pendant que la digestion se fait, on se raconte des histoires. C'est toujours celle de la maîtresse qu'on suit le mieux. Pourtant personne n'est astreint à écouter, et deux ou trois petits, qui ne comprennent pas encore un long discours, vont se rouler dans l'herbe un peu plus loin. Puis, quelquefois, impressionnés par le silence de leurs camarades, qui sont tout oreilles pour le beau récit, tout doucement ils se rapprochent et se mettent eux aussi à écouter.

Vers deux heures, tout le monde rentre dans la maison, c'est l'heure de la sieste car si l'Asilo est la maison du travail, il a aussi, comme toutes les autres maisons, ses heures de repos. Les enfants se sont levés de très bonne heure, en même temps que les plus grands qui vont aux champs; ainsi la journée est longue pour des bambins de trois à six ans.

Alors dans la jolie petite salle, parmi les fleurs et les oiseaux, „le marchand de sable a passé et leur a fermé les yeux." Et si quelqu'un entrerait à ce moment, il se croirait transporté dans un monde enchanté: la salle est claire et gaie, comme d'habitude, les fenêtres sont grandes ouvertes, . . . et là, étendus par terre, sur un grand tapis, ou assis dans leur petite chaise, la tête appuyée sur les petits bras potelés croisés sur la table, tous les bébés se sont endormis. Le spectacle est saisissant.

Et cela dure ainsi pendant une demi-heure, trois quarts d'heure; alors on voit des paupières se soulever, un petit corps s'allonger, des petits bras s'étirer. Et tout doucement, un bambin se lève, regarde un moment autour de lui, et quand les yeux sont de nouveau tout grands ouverts, il s'en va sur la pointe des pieds, chercher dans l'armoire le travail qu'il a commencé le matin. Il observe chacun de ses mouvements, pour ne faire aucun bruit qui

pourrait réveiller un de ses camarades. Et ainsi de suite, jusqu'à ce que, au bout d'une heure, quelquefois plus tard ou plus tôt, suivant la saison, toute la petite famille est de nouveau active et gazouillante. Quelle atmosphère bienfaisante on respire, au milieu de ces enfants reposés !

Leur travail préféré est souvent le dessin ; mais alors que les enfants d'autres Asili, comme celui de Bellinzona par exemple, aiment surtout à dessiner et combiner des formes géométriques, les remplissant ensuite de couleurs, ceux qui sont plus avancés à Caneggio préfèrent dessiner et colorier des fleurs, des fruits, ou autres images représentant des scènes enfantines, dont les contours ont été dessinés par la maîtresse. Ils montrent dans leur choix des couleurs un sens de l'observation et de l'harmonie tout à fait surprenante.

L'heure du départ est bientôt là, et il faut encore que les enfants arrosent les fleurs, soignent les canaris, et mettent tout en ordre dans la maisonnette. On croirait voir alors se lever une armée de petites mains. Les uns prennent des arrosoirs, d'autres des balais, etc. En un tour de main tout est en ordre et reluisant de propreté ; les oiseaux et les plantes ont reçu tout ce dont ils ont besoin, et les joyeux enfants peuvent se retirer. Ils n'oublient pas auparavant de vous donner des fleurs de leur jardin, de vous saluer poliment, fixant sur vous leur regard limpide et aimant, puis ils vous disent encore : „Tu reviendras bientôt !”

Et je suis sûre que ceux qui auront le privilège de passer une journée dans cet Asilo, rentreront chez eux, comme moi, les mains pleines de fleurs et l'âme en fête. Heureux petits enfants de Caneggio !

Tous les Asili ne sont pas dirigés de façon aussi compétente. Chaque maîtresse a des expériences à faire pour en arriver là. Mais petit à petit la lumière se fait, et au cours de ces douze années le progrès est allé s'accroissant. Un peu partout les enfants ont acquis cette indépendance de la volonté et de la pensée. Ils n'épellent plus d'une voix monotone, mais lisent d'une façon intelligente des mots, des phrases qui sont à leur portée et que

leurs maîtresses ont préparés pour eux. Leurs dessins prouvent combien le sens de l'observation s'est développé, et révèlent aussi leur tempérament, leurs goûts. Ils écrivent ce qu'ils pensent, sont gracieux et adroits dans leurs mouvements.

Les maîtresses de ces Asili font toutes preuve de bonne volonté. Elles sont toujours aidées et encouragées par M^{lle} Bon-tempi, qui est pour elles non pas un juge qui condamne, mais un guide qui sait les éclairer, en qui elles ont mis toute leur confiance. Leur inspectrice est pour elles ce que la maîtresse est pour l'enfant dans l'école moderne, telle que la désire Dr. Montessori.

Et c'est ainsi que le Tessin marche de l'avant dans la voie de cette éducation qui prépare pour la société de demain des individualités fortes et saines, car elle est inspirée de cette grande pensée de T. Néal, encadrée dans le vestibule de l'Asilo modèle de Bellinzona :

„Riaccostarsi alla natura, abbandonarsi a questa con fiducia e amore, è il segreto di tutti i rinascimenti"

Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Montessori-Schule Wien X.

Das Haus der Kinder Wien X ist bis heute die einzige Schule in Oesterreich, die durchaus nach den Grundsätzen Frau Dr. Maria Montessori's geleitet wird.

In den Jahren 1919—21 als das wirtschaftliche Elend in Wien so gross war, dass der Nachwuchs ganzer breiter Schichten gesundheitlich schwer gefaehrdet war, wurden von fast allen Ländern, die durch den Krieg nicht so schwer geschaedigt worden waren, in Oesterreich Einrichtungen ins Leben gerufen, deren Zweck es war, wenigstens das Elend der Kinder zu mildern. In dieser Zeit ist auch unser „Haus der Kinder“ von England aus gegruendet worden. Durch die damals in Oesterreich herrschenden wirtschaftlichen Verhaeltnisse war sein doppeltes Ziel von vornherein gegeben: Es sollte der erste Versuch der Montessori-Methode in Oesterreich sein und gleichzeitig fuer eine Anzahl Kinder gute Ernaehrung, Koerperpflege und saubere, geheizte Aufenthaltsraeume sicherstellen. Aus diesen beiden Zielen ergab sich ein Arbeitsfeld, das ueber den Rahmen der meisten anderen Montessorischulen hinausging. Die Kinder sollten in der Schule nicht nur 1—2 Mahlzeiten haben, sondern die ganze Ernaehrung sollte von der Schule bestritten werden. Sie musste von $\frac{1}{2}$ 7 Uhr morgens, wenn die Muetter der Kinder in die Fabriken gingen, bis 6 Uhr abends geoeffnet sein und gleichzeitig fuer Baeder, aertzliche Ueberwachung und Zahnpflege der Kinder und Recherchen in den Familiensorgen. All dies bedeutete ein ziemliches Plus an Arbeit, hat uns aber paedagogisch ganz unverhofft viel geholfen.

Nunmehr blickt die Schule auf das erste Jahr ihres Bestehens

zurueck.¹⁾ Der Betrieb ist so gefuehrt worden, dass ausser der Leiterin in diesem Jahr kein Erwachsener in der Schule taetig war. Es wurden alle Arbeitsgebiete wie: paedagogische Assistenz, Koerperpflege der Kinder, Kuechenverwaltung und Hausarbeit, Buchfuehrung und Bibliotheksverwaltung von 16—19 jaehrigen Maedchen versorgt.

Mit der Gruendung der Schule war urspruenglich nur der Zweck, die Montessori-Methode in Oesterreich bekannt zu machen, verbunden. Die Einstellung von Jugendlichen in den Betrieb ergab sich erst spaeter. Die Gruender hatten die Umgebung der Kinder in der Schule sehr sorgfaeltig vorbereitet und wollten nun fuer die Arbeit Menschen finden, die Freiheit des Wesens mit selbstvergessener Hingabe an das Werk verbanden. Ohne dabei von irgendwelchem Prinzip auszugehen, bestand der Stab der Schule nach wenigen Wochen ausschliesslich aus Jugendlichen. Die Erfahrungen, die wir in diesem einen Jahr gemacht haben, duerften von allgemeinen Interesse sein.

Um die Probleme gleich einmal aufzuzaehlen:

Herausfinden von geeigneten Erzieherinnen fuer die Montessorimethode.

Ausbildung von Montessori-Lehrerinnen, resp. Vorbereitung zu einer Montessoriausbildung;

Vorbildliche Erzeugung aller Gegenstaende, die zur Umgebung des Kindes gehoeren.

Es hat sich in unserer Schule insofern ein Zusammenhang dieser drei Probleme gezeigt, als alle Massnahmen, die sich uns von einem Gesichtspunkt aus aufdraengten, meist fuer die beiden anderen auch grosse Vorteile brachten.

Wie schon erwaeht, hatte es sich uns in erster Linie darum gehandelt, die geeigneten Hilfskraefte fuer unsere Schule zu

¹⁾ Dieser Bericht ist fast vor Jahresfrist geschrieben worden. Doch ist es leider nicht moeglich im Rahmen desselben auch ueber die Erfahrungen des 2. Jahres zu berichten. Was wir anstreben ist in mancher Hinsicht so abweichend vom Haerkoeemlichen, dass wir zuerst die allgemeinen Grundsaeetze ausfuehren muessen. Spaeter soll gelegentlich ueber Sonderentwicklungen, die sich im 2. Jahr ergaben, berichtet werden.

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finden. Da aber paedagogische Reformbestrebungen augenblicklich mehrere vorhanden sind, galt es, unter den zahlreich zu erwartenden Anmeldungen zur Mitarbeit an der Schule die geeignetsten auszuwaehlen. Hier deckte sich zunaechst einmal das Interesse der Schule mit der Ausbildung des Einzelnen auf vorzueglichste Weise. Jeder, der zu uns kam, musste sich fuer ein praktisches Jahr verpflichten, d.h. zunaechst einmal seine paedagogischen Plaene in den Hintergrund stellen und bei aller praktischen Arbeit, die es in der Schule gab mit anfassen. Je nach persoenlicher Eignung erhielt jeder nach etlichen Wochen ein eigenes Ressort, in dem er weitgehend selbststaendig und verantwortlich war. Damit war erreicht dass 1. die nur einseitig intellektuell eingestellten Menschen, die ein rein aeusserliches Interesse fuer paedagogische Bestrebungen hatten, abgehalten wurden, zu uns zu kommen, 2. die mechanischen Arbeiten erledigt wurden, ohne dass die Aufnahme von Dienstboten noetig gewesen waere, 3. die zukuenftigen Lehrerinnen eine gruendliche praktische Ausbildung, die die Grundlage fuer alle spaetere Ausbildung sein sollte, erhielten. Sie lernten bei ihrer Arbeit Ruhe, Selbstbeherrschung⁴ und Selbstverleugnung in einem Ausmasz, das die beste Gewaehr fuer die kuenftige Arbeit bot und die spaetere wortreiche Darlegung des Gegenstandes „Ordnung“ ueberfluessig machte. Beim groessten Teil der Arbeit waren die Kinder anwesend oder in der Naehel. Die Praktikantinnen konnten die Kinder beobachten und die Art, wie man mit den Kindern arbeitet, um so zu pruefen, ob sie selbst fuer diese wissenschaftliche Art des Unterrichtes geeignet waeren, — ein weiterer Vorteil gegenueber Lehrerinnenbildungsanstalten. Bei diesen muss die Entscheidung fuer einen spaeteren Beruf sehr frueh getroffen werden und falls der Entschluss waehrend der Ausbildung geaendert wird, ist die aufgebraachte Lernzeit vergeudet. Aendert bei uns eine Schuelerin nach dem praktischen Jahr ihren Entschluss, so hat sie immerhin das Jahr nicht verloren, sondern auf mehreren Gebieten an praktischer Erfahrung gewonnen, welch letztere als Gegengewicht gegen unsere herkoemmliche Lernschule gar nicht hoch genug einzuschaetzen ist. Auch

hatten sie an Verantwortung und Selbststaendigkeit gewonnen.

Als zweiten Punkt erwähnten wir die Vorbildung resp. die Ausbildung von Lehrerinnen. Vonder Bedeutung der praktischen Arbeit und der Selbstdisziplin, die durch diese gewonnen wird, ist schon die Rede gewesen. Vielleicht noch grundlegender ist folgende Erwaegung: Eine Montessori-Lehrerin muss zu ihren Kindern und zu den Menschen ueberhaupt, eine positive Einstellung haben, starke Lebensfreude, Gemeinschaftsinn, psychologische Feinfuehligkeit und Hingabe besitzen. Die Schule, die in der Hauptsache auf die Erreichung eines Lernzieles gerichtet ist, ist ebensowenig geeignet diese Faehigkeiten zu entwickeln, wie unser heutiges Erwerbsleben, das oftmals zu hart zupackt und — wie man oft an jungen, im Erwerbsleben stehenden Maedchen und Frauen beobachten kann — in wenigen Jahren Mut, Idealismus und Lebensfreude in Bitterkeit, Engherzigkeit und Pedanterie verwandelt. Solchen Menschen, die ihr ganzes oder halbes Leben lang von der Gesellschaft gedemuetigt, ausgenuetzt und zurueck gesetzt worden sind, eines Tages zu sagen: „von nun an versucht eine Gemeinschaft mit den euch anvertrauten Kindern zu bilden, jedes Kind soll genug glueckliche Freiheit und Liebe geniessen und dadurch zum guten und hilfsbereiten Glied der Gemeinschaft werden,“ — das allein kann bei den Lehrerinnen nicht die richtige Einstellung erwecken. Beides, Schule und Erwerb, muessen unter einem Dach vereinigt werden, um jenes Gemeinschaftsleben zu erzeugen, in dem der kuenftige Lehrer leben und taetig sein soll. Nur so kann er am besten alle jene sozialen Tugenden erwerben, die er einst bei seinen Schuelern erwecken will.

Unsere Gemeinschaft hatte im Vorjahre 3, zeitweise 7 Mitglieder. Haette eine einzelne Lehrerin mit uninteressierten Angestellten gearbeitet, so waere es ihr niemals moeglich gewesen, den Geist, der heute in der Schule herrscht, hineinzutragen. Bei uns fühlten sich alle gleich als Mitarbeiter, alle strebten dem gleichen Ziele zu, alle waren gleich verantwortlich. Damit war es auch von vorneherein ausgeschlossen, eine Arbeit als minderwertiger als die andere zu betrachten. Zur Erreichung

unseres Ziels waren sie alle gleich bedeutungsvoll und alle mussten mit der gleichen Liebe und Pflichttreue ausgeführt werden.

Dies als kurzen Bericht ueber die praktische und soziale Ausbildung, die bei uns im vergangenen Jahr angestrebt wurde.

Hinsichtlich der dritten Seite der Ausbildung, die die beiden ergaenzt, der exakt wissenschaftlichen, koennen wir leider groesstenteils nur von Plaenen sprechen. Eine Erziehung zum wissenschaftlich exakten Denken, kann nur durch Einfuehrung in die Theorie und Praxis der modernen Naturwissenschaften erreicht werden, zu der uns aber leider im Vorjahre die Mittel fehlten. Es musste ja vorerst einmal die Erhaltung der Schule und erst in zweiter Linie die Ausbildung des Einzelnen sichergestellt werden. Im verflossenenen Jahr hat ein nunmehr ein 2 u. ein 5 wöchiges Biologisches Praktikum u. Mikroskopierkurs stattgefunden. Alle, an der Schule Arbeitenden (es hatte sich nach einigen Monaten der Name „Arbeitsgemeinschaft“ eingebuegert, denn das Wesentliche unserer Gemeinschaft war unsere gemeinsame Arbeit) also kurzweg die Arbeitsgemeinschaft fand sich an einigen Abenden der Woche zu bestimmten Besprechungen zusammen. Und zwar gab es wirtschaftliche und paedagogische. In diesen die von den einzelnen Mitgliedern gemachten Beobachtungen an den Kindern, ergaenzt durch Tagebuecher und Kurven besprochen. An anderen Abenden wurden gemeinsam Werke Frau Dr. Montessoris gelesen und besprochen und paedagogische Referate gehalten. An einem Abend der Woche gab es Materialuebung. Auch veranstaltete die Arbeitsgemeinschaft einen Gymnastikkurs.

Im zweiten Halbjahre setzten die Vorbereitungen fuer den Montessori-Verlag ein. Ein Verlag, der es sich zur Aufgabe macht, mustergiltiges Montessori-Material, wie auch Kindermobel und Gebrauchsgegenstaende in bester Ausfuehrung herzustellen. Der Verlag will durch Aufstellung mustergiltiger Dinge sowohl eine erzieherische Aufgabe verfolgen, als auch spaeterhin helfen, die materielle Grundlage fuer die Schule sicherzustellen. Vor allem aber

ist es der Zweck des Verlages, die an der Schule geleistete sorgfaeltige Beobachtungsarbeit an den Kindern zugleich zur Verbesserung aller Dinge zu verwerten, mit denen das Kind in Schule und Haus umgeben ist, also :Moebel, Gebrauchsgegenstaende u.s.w. zu verwerten, mit anderen Worten, wir versuchten die an der Schule geleistete wissenschaftliche Arbeit auf moeglichst kurzem Wege wirtschaftlich nutzbar zu machen. Zwangslos ergab sich in diesem Verlag die Mitarbeit Jugendlicher, die auch im „Haus der Kinder“ arbeiteten. Nach kurzer Zeit berichteten uns diese unabhaengig von einander, welchen Vorteil ihnen diese Arbeit gebracht hatte. Ihre Beobachtungen an den Kindern verfolgten nun einen fest umrissenen praktischen Zweck und dieser trug zur Schaerfung ihrer Beobachtungsgabe wesentlich bei und half ihnen so bei ihrer paedagogischen Arbeit. Durch die gruendliche Material- und Sachkenntnis konnten sie viel durchgreifender die Umgebung des Kindes in dem von uns angestrebten Sinne verbessern und neue Kombinationen finden.

Die Montessori-Lehrerin soll ja vor allem auch eine sorgsame Pflegerin der Umgebung des Kindes sein und gerade durch diese Art der Arbeit erwachte neues Interesse fuer all die Kleinigkeiten, die in ihrer Gesamtheit doch so wesentlich werden koennen fuer das paedagogische Niveau einer Schule.

Wir wollen damit gewiss nicht behaupten, dass es fuer jede Lehrerin wuensenswert waere, ausser ihrer Lehrtaetigkeit auch noch im erwaehten Sinne taetig zu sein. Ueberhaupt sollen ja diese Zeilen nicht ein Programm enthalten, sondern nur einen Bericht ueber das, was bei uns versucht wurde, geben. Und zwar deswegen, weil das, was wir getan haben, Fruechte getragen hat, die weit ueber den Rahmen, den wir urspruenglich ins Auge gefasst hatten, hinausgehen. Es ist hier eben einmal der umgekehrte Weg gegangen worden. Nicht ein Programm wurde aufgestellt, sondern die praktische Notwendigkeit, die Einrichtung und Fuehrung der ersten Montessorischule in Oesterreich musste geloest werden und damit traten Probleme, die uns anfangs fern gelegen hatten, wie Vorbildung von Montessori lehrerinnen und die Erzeugung des Montessorimaterials in den Kreis unserer anfangs so bescheidenen Arbeit.

Das zweite Montessori-Kinderhaus in Berlin.

Im Mai dieses Jahres wurde im Norden Berlins das Kinderhaus II eröffnet. Ein Teil einer Gemeindeschule mit einem Stück Land hinter ihr waren der Montessori-Gesellschaft zugewiesen worden. Einen ganzen Monat lang hatte die Leiterin mit freiwilligen Hilfskräften gearbeitet, um den Kindern ein schönes und trauliches Heim zu schaffen. Wände und Decken des grossen Raumes wurden mit leuchtenden Farben gestrichen, von denen sich die weisslackierten Kindermöbel, Tische, Stühle, niedrige Schränke, kleine Waschtische, Blumenkästen usw. sehr schön abheben. An den Wänden hängen ganz niedrig schöne Bilder, damit die Kinder sie gut betrachten können. — Die Hälfte des Gartenlandes wurde mit Rasen besetzt und bildet einen herlichen Spielplatz für die Kinder. Auf der anderen Seite liegen die Beete der Kinder, auf denen fleissig gearbeitet wird. Eine schöne Sommerzeit haben die Kinder verlebt. Man merkt ihnen die körperliche Erholung deutlich an. Die Beschäftigung mit dem Montessori-Lehrmittel zur Entfaltung der Sinne und der Aufmerksamkeit, die häuslichen Beschäftigungen, die ihre kleinen Muskeln entwickeln, ferner die rhythmischen Uebungen üben einen starken Reiz auf die Kinder aus. Nach den Beobachtungen der Leiterin und nach den Aussagen der Eltern, die gern und regelmässig zu den Elternversammlungen kommen, zeigen die Kinder in ihrem Wesen und in ihrem Verhalten eine deutliche und vorteilhafte Entwicklung.

Im April wurden 25 Kinder aufgenommen. Die städtische Säuglingsfürsorge übt die ärztliche Aufsicht aus. Das Jugendamt unterstützt die Bestrebungen der Schule besonders dadurch, dass er allen Kindern Quäkerspeisung bewilligt hat.

Für die Kinder wird wöchentlich ein Beitrag von 50 Pf. erhoben. Kinder, deren Eltern arbeitslos sind oder deren Mütter allein stehen, sind von der Zahlung befreit.

(Aus den „Montessori-Nachrichten“).

Bericht über die Montessori-Bewegung in Deutschland.

Im Jahre 1913 erschien Dr. Maria Montessoris Buch „*Methodo della Pedagogia scientifico-sperimentale*“ in deutscher Übersetzung unter dem Titel „Selbsttätige Erziehung im frühen Kindesalter“. Das Buch erregte Aufsehen. Zwei deutsche Frauen gingen nach Rom, um an den beiden internationalen Ausbildungskursen, die in 1913 und 1914 von der Dottssa Montessori in Rom abgehalten wurden, teilzunehmen. Die eine richtete im Pestalozzi-Froebel-Hause in Berlin einen Montessori-Versuch ein, der aber von Anfang an darunter leiden musste, dass an jener Stätte die Montessori-Methode nicht in ihrer reinen Form, sondern nur als „Froebel-Montessori-Synthese“ angewendet werden konnte. So blieb dieser erste Versuch leider ohne Bedeutung für die Einführung der Methode in Deutschland und für die Montessori Bewegung. Die zweite Montessori-Schülerin machte einen Versuch im Krüppelheim in Nowawes bei Potsdam. Auch hier wurden der Methode fremde Bestandteile beigemischt.

Der erste Versuch mit der reinen Montessori-Methode wurde auf deutschem Boden noch während des Krieges gemacht: Ida Hohenemser, eine wohlhabende Menschen und Kinderfreundin, sammelte in ihrer Wohnung in Meiningen die armen Kinder, die hungernd und verwahrlost auf den Strassen herum liefen, während ihre Mütter in den Fabriken arbeiteten.

Während eines mehrjährigen Aufenthaltes in Italien hatte Ida Hohenemser die Montessori-Methode kennen gelernt und studiert. Ihre Wohnung und ihr schöner Garten in Meiningen wurden nun das erste deutsche „Haus der Kinder“. Sie erzog und unterrichtete ihre Kleinen nach der Methode Maria Montessoris. Emsig arbeitete sie an der Übersetzung der „*Autoeducazione*“,

um die Weiterführung der Montessori-Methode für die schulpflichtigen Kinder in Deutschland vorzubereiten. Im Juli 1920 wurde sie ihren Pflegebefohlenen und ihrem Werk durch ihre plötzlichen Tod entrissen.

Der erste *öffentliche* Versuch mit der reinen Montessori-Methode trat im Mai 1919 ins Leben. Die Gemeinde Berlin—Laukwitz richtete ihren Volkskindergarten als „Montessori-Kinderhaus“ ein. An ihm wirkten Elisabeth Schwarz und Elsa Ochs. Bald darauf entstanden in Berlin zwei private Montessori-Versuche. Alle drei Montessori-Klassen erregten nicht nur in Berlin, sondern in ganz Deutschland und weit über seine Grenzen hinaus die Aufmerksamkeit der Pädagogen und Ärzte. Laukwitz wurde später dem westlichen Vororte Steglitz zugemeindet, dessen konservativer Schulrat Oktober 1922 das Montessori—Kinderhaus in Laukwitz schloss und wieder einen Froebel-Kindergarten an seine Stelle setzte. Elisabeth Schwarz-Hierl ging nach Nürnberg, um das von der Stadt bewilligte „Haus der Kinder“ zu eröffnen. Sie leitete es, bis sie dazu berufen wurde, in Jena einen neuen Montessori-Versuch einzurichten. Dort arbeitet sie gemeinsam mit Elfriede Glückselig, die vom Juni ds. Jahres ab ihre⁴ Zöglinge aus der vorbereitenden Klasse als Schulklasse weiterführen durfte. Die Mittel hierfür wurden zum Teil von der Universität Jena, die großes Interesse an dem Montessori-Experiment nimmt, bewilligt.

Elsa Ochs übernahm die Leitung des Montessori-Kinderhauses in Berlin—Wilmerdorf, das von den beiden deutschen Montessori-Gesellschaften gegründet wurde. Durch die Hilfe der holländischen Montessori-Freunde war es uns möglich gewesen, die Einrichtung für das „Haus der Kinder“ zu beschaffen, und lange noch erhielten wir von ihnen willkommene Zuschüsse für Personalunkosten, bis die Stabilisierung der deutschen Währung es uns ermöglichte unsere Einrichtungen aus eignen Kräften zu erhalten.

Zweimal hat Maria Montessori in Deutschland über ihre Methode gesprochen. Das erste mal geschah es Pfingsten 1922 in Mainz im Rahmen der Tagung des „Bundes entschiedener Schul-

reformer". Die tiefe Ergriffenheit aller Zuhörer spiegelt sich wieder in dem Bericht, den ein Lehrer an die „Berliner Volkszeitung“ sandte. Wir geben ihn nachstehend im Wortlaut wieder:

„Maria Montessori spricht,

Der dritte Tag des Mainzer Kongresses „Menschenbildung und Lebensgestaltung“ führt zur Höhe weitester Menschenschau. Zum erstenmal nach dem Kriege spricht in Deutschland die grösste Pädagogin seit den Tagen Rousseaus und Pestallozzis: Dr. Maria Montessori aus Rom. In ihrem schlichten, schwarzen Kleide steht die würdige Matrone ergrauten Haares vor der hundertköpfigen, gedrängten Menge, noch heute den Glanz südlicher Schönheit im flammenden Auge, in sprühender Rede, in edler, temperamentvoller Geste verratend. In anderthalbstündiger italienischer Rede, verdolmetscht durch ihre getreue Schülerin Elsa Ochs, entwirft sie die Leitgedanken ihres Erziehungssystems:

Gott schuf den Menschen ihm zum Bilde, zum Bilde Gottes schuf er ihn — mit diesem ewigen Grundgesetz aller Menschenwürde legte sie das Fundament aller neuen Erziehung, die es von nun an ablehnt, Kinderseelen nach dem verzerrten Bilde menschlicher Unvollkommenheit nachzupressen. Es handelt sich nicht um intellektuelle Umlernung, es handelt sich um völlige geistige Umstellung. Die Seele muss frei werden von allen Schlacken, muss rein dastehen, muss erst „entwerden“, wie die deutschen Mystiker sagen, um dem Leben dienen zu können. Der Lehrer muss sich selber vernichten, um Diener am keimenden Leben im Kinde zu sein. Wir können nur der eignen Kraft des Kindes, seiner *Selbstentwicklung* helfen; wir müssen es tun, indem wir die angemessene Umgebung schaffen.

Nicht um lernen zu machen, sondern um *leben* zu lassen, sei die Schule der Zukunft bereitet. Maria Montessori schildert die Einrichtung einer kindgemässen Schule, sie proklamiert den Grundsatz dieser Schule: kein Kind besitze etwas zu eigen, kein Spielzeug, keinen Rangplatz, alles gehöre jedem. Jedes Beschäftigungsmittel ist nur einmal vorhanden, die Kinder müssen austauschen, Rücksicht nehmen lernen, sich einpassen. Das

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Leben erzieht sie, nicht der Lehrer. Alles vollzieht sich gründlich: spontane Entwicklung geordneter Aktivität. Kein Lehrer erzwingt die Lösung der Aufgaben, die Kinder suchen frei ihre Tätigkeit. Arbeit erblüht als schönste und reinste Funktion des menschlichen Lebens. In der freudigen Einwurzelung in alle praktische Arbeit reift die Brüderlichkeit der Menschheit, reife innere Ausgeglichenheit polarer Harmonie im Menschen. Lassen wir dem Kinde die Ruhe zum Eigenwachstum.

Diese Erziehungsaufgabe bedarf einer neuen Generation der Erzieher nach dem Worte der Bibel: Wer unter Euch der erste sein will, der sei der Diener aller. Nicht isoliert-egoistische Einzelstarke entwickeln wir so, sondern den Einzelnen stets im Kreise der Gemeinschaft.

Maria Montessori weist darauf hin, wie in allen Ländern, in Spanien und Italien, in Holland und England, in Japan und Indien in diesem Geiste gearbeitet wird: lieblich und edel ist das deutsche Kind, lieblich und edel das Kind jedes Volkes. Kein Kind eines Volkes ist nach dem Gesetz des Lebens zur Dienstbarkeit oder zur Knechtschaft bestimmt: Lasset uns die brüderliche Gemeinschaft der Menschheit erbauen!

Brausender Beifall ehrte die edle Kündlerin wahrhaft menschlicher Würde."

Im Oktober 1922 sprach Maria Montessori in der Universität Berlin. Hier fanden ihre Worte den gleichen starken Wiederhall in allen Herzen. In der Tagespresse und in Zeitschriften wurde die hohe Bedeutung des Vortrages gewürdigt und der Wunsch ausgesprochen, dass wir auch in Deutschland Montessori-Versuchsschulen einrichten und wissenschaftlich beobachten möchten. Die Ministerien, die Schulbehörden und wissenschaftliche Körperschaften hatten Vertreter zum Vortrage der Dott^{ssa} Montessori entsandt. Der Minister für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung gab einen Tee zu Ehren der grossen Frau, die er in Spanien inmitten ihres dortigen Wirkungskreises persönlich kennen gelernt hatte. Auswärtige Botschafter huldigten ihr bei einem Mittagessen im Hause des Barons van Nagell von der holländischen Gesandtschaft.

Dr. Franz Hilker schlug die Herausgabe eines Buches vor, das die Erfahrungen, die bis jetzt in Deutschland bei der Anwendung der Montessori-Erziehung gemacht worden waren, darlegen sollte. Das Buch erschien im Januar 1923 bei Schwetschke u. Sohn. Es enthielt zwei Beiträge der Dottoressa Montessori und drei Arbeiten ihrer deutschen Schülerinnen.

Die Magistrate verschiedener deutscher Städte, Lehrer- und Lehrerinnenvereine, zuweilen auch die Elternbeiräte der Schulen luden die deutschen Vertreterinnen der Montessori-Methode zu Vorträgen ein. Diese Vorträge, die gewöhnlich an Hand eines reichen Lichtbildermaterials gehalten wurden, verbreiteten die theoretische Kenntnis der Methode ziemlich schnell über den grössten Teil von Deutschland. Solche Vorträge wurden hauptsächlich in Berlin und seinen Vororten und in verschiedenen Städten der Mark Brandenburg gehalten, dann in mehreren Städten Pommerns, Sachsens und Schlesiens, in Frankfurt a. Main, in Nürnberg, Mainz, Köln, Aachen und in mehreren Städten des Ruhrgebiets. Viele Einladungen zu Vorträgen liegen noch vor, denen auch nach und nach genügt werden soll.

Im November 1919 schlossen sich einige Montessori-Fachleute zu dem „Deutschen Montessori-Komitee“ zusammen, das mit Vorträgen, Zeitungsartikeln und einer kleinen Broschüre, die als Werbeschrift dienen sollte, an die Öffentlichkeit trat. Man richtete eine Montessori-Sprechstunde ein, die von Elsa Ochs und Clara Grunwald einmal wöchentlich in ihrer Wohnung abgehalten wird. Die vielen Zuschriften von Eltern und Lehrern aus allen Teilen Deutschlands und der rege Besuch der Sprechstunde geben Aufschluss darüber, wie weit die Montessori-Gedanken schon in alle Schichten des deutschen Volkes gedrungen sind. In die Sprechstunde kommt die gebildete Mutter wie die Frau aus dem Volke, um sich Rat für die Erziehung der Kinder zu holen, Kinderärzte schicken Eltern mit schwer erziehbaren Kindern dahin. Manchmal gleicht die Montessori-Sprechstunde einer Berufsberatungsstelle, an die sich die Tochter des wohlhabenden Mannes, der ihr die Mittel für eine längere Ausbildung gewähren kann, wendet, ebenso wie die intelligente Arbeiterin, die erfahren will, wie sie

ihre Kraft und ihre Liebe in den Dienst der heranwachsenden Generation stellen kann.

Der ziemlich weit verbreiteten Kenntnis der Montessori-Methode in Deutschland und der Begeisterung für sie entspricht in keiner Weise die praktische Arbeit. Das liegt zum Teil an unserer Armut, die schwer Mittel für eine neue Einrichtung herbeischaffen lässt, zum Teil an der Schwerfälligkeit des bürokratischen Apparates unserer Schulbehörden und an ihrer Abneigung gegen ein so umwälzend Neues, zum Teil aber auch daran, dass wir erst so wenige geeignete und gut ausgebildete Montessori-Lehrkräfte in Deutschland haben.

Um wenigstens diesem Mangel abzuhelpfen, entschloss sich das Montessori-Komitee, einen Ausbildungslehrgang einzurichten, den mit Zustimmung der Dott^{sa} Montessori ihre beiden Schülerinnen Elsa Ochs und Clara Grunwald leiten sollten. Dieser Lehrgang der für Lehrkräfte gedacht war, die schon beruflich ausgebildet sind, dauerte vom 11 April bis zum 29 September 1923. Er wurde im Hörsaal des „Zentralinstituts für Erziehung und Unterricht“ in Berlin abgehalten. Die Beobachtungsübungen fanden vormittags, die praktischen Übungen am Montessori-Material und die musikalisch-rhythmischen Übungen fanden nachmittags im „Hause der Kinder“ in Berlin-Wilmersdorf statt. An dem Lehrgang haben 22 Personen teilgenommen: Lehrerinnen, Kindergärtnerinnen, eine Oberkindergärtnerin, eine Kinderärztin, eine Oberlehrerin, einige Mütter als Hospitantinnen. Nach Beginn des Kursus trafen noch viele Meldungen, besonders von Lehrern, ein, denen, da der Kursus bereits im Gange war, nicht mehr stattgegeben werden konnte. Wir werden aber dafür Sorge tragen, dass der neue Kursus zur Ausbildung deutscher Lehrkräfte in der Montessori-Methode, den wir im Sommerhalbjahr 1925 einrichten wollen, so frühzeitig bekannt gemacht wird, dass die Meldungen rechtzeitig eintreffen können. Unsere Schülerinnen haben hauptsächlich private „Häuser der Kinder“ eingerichtet. Einige in Berlin, Dr. Käte Stern in Breslau, Dr. Emmy Bergmann, die noch in Amsterdam bei Dr. Montessori selbst weiter studiert hat, wird in Freiburg i. B. arbeiten. Dr. Emmi Drexel, die auch in Amsterdam bei

Dr. Montessori ausgebildet wurde, hat in Helleran bei Dresden ein „Haus der Kinder“ eröffnet, das mit einem Internat verbunden ist.

Weil das Deutsche Montessori-Komitee nach seinen Satzungen nur Montessori-Fachleute zu Mitgliedern haben kann, wurde am 15. November 1921 eine Tochtergesellschaft gegründet, die alle diejenigen Menschen zu gemeinsamer Arbeit zusammenschliessen soll, die für die Ausbreitung der Montessori-Methode in Deutschland wirken und besonders für die Gründung und Erhaltung von Montessori-Kinderhäusern sorgen wollen. Die „Gesellschaft der Freunde und Förderer der Montessori-Methode in Deutschland, E.V.“ trat auch mit einer Propaganda-Schrift hervor, in der die soziale Notwendigkeit der Kinderhäuser und die besondere Bedeutung der Montessori-Methode für die Gemeinschaftserziehung dargetan wurde. Die kleine Schrift war in kurzer Zeit vergriffen. Die Gesellschaft wirkt in enger Zusammenarbeit mit dem Montessori-Komitee. Beide zusammen haben das „Haus der Kinder“ in Berlin-Wilmersdorf gegründet, und beide erhalten gemeinsam das im April dieses Jahres eröffnete „Haus der Kinder“ am Leopoldplatz, im Norden Berlins, das von einer unserer Schülerinnen geleitet wird. Vorläufig bestehen beide Kinderhäuser in der Form von Halbtagskindergärten. Unser eifriges Bestreben geht dahin, das Kinderhaus am Leopoldplatz, das hauptsächlich von den Kindern der arbeitenden Bevölkerung besucht wird, zu einem Tagesheim auszugestalten. In dem Maße, in dem sich die Zahl unserer Mitglieder und dadurch unsere finanzielle Kraft vergrößert, werden wir weitere Kinderhäuser und später Schulklassen gründen.

Statt der vergriffenen Werbeschrift werden wir in einigen Wochen eine neue erscheinen lassen. Sie wird vier verschiedene Arbeiten enthalten.

Von mehreren pädagogischen Zeitschriften werden wir immer wieder zur Mitarbeit eingeladen, Dr. Emmy Bergmann hat zwei längere Arbeiten in der „Deutschen Lehrerzeitung“ und in der „Schlesischen Schulzeitung“ erscheinen lassen. Die „Saarländische Schulzeitung“ hat eine ganze Montessori-Nummer herausgebracht,

die „Neue Erziehung“ will im März des nächsten Jahres eine Montessori-Nummer erscheinen lassen. Einige Verleger haben uns aufgefordert, Bücher in ihrem Verlage erscheinen zu lassen. In mehreren Städten wartet man nur auf die Lehrkräfte, die in unseren nächsten Ausbildungskursus vorbereitet werden sollen, um „Häuser der Kinder“ ins Leben zu rufen. So dürfen wir wohl hoffen, dass es in Deutschland auch mit der praktischen Arbeit bald schneller vorwärts gehen wird.

CLARA GRUNWALD.

The Montessori Movement in Germany.

In the year 1913 there appeared Dr. Maria Montessori's book *"Metodo della Pedagogia scientifico sperimentale"* in a German translation under the title of *"Selbsttätige Erziehung im frühen Kindesalter."* The work aroused considerable attention, and two German women went to Rome to attend the two international training courses which were held there in 1913—1914 by Dottorressa Montessori. One of these on her return initiated at the Pestalozzi-Froebel House in Berlin an experimental Montessori course. This course, however, from its inception was handicapped by the fact that at it the Montessori method could not be applied in its pure form, but only in conjunction, as a "Froebel-Montessori Synthesis"; and so this first attempt was of but little importance in the investigation of the method in Germany or for the Montessori Movement in general. The other German Montessori pupil started a trial course in the Cripples' Home at Nowawes near Potsdam. Here, too, the method could be used only in association with foreign elements.

The first attempt made on German soil to apply the Montessori method in its pure form took place during the War. Ida Hohenemser, a well-to-do philanthropist and lover of children, gathered together in her home at Meiningen a number of the poorer children in her neighbourhood, who were accustomed to roam the streets hungry and neglected while their mothers were at work in the factories. Ida Hohenemser, during a stay in Italy of several years, had got to know of the Montessori method and made a study of it. Her home and beautiful garden in Meiningen now became the first German "Children's House", where she brought up and taught her little ones on Maria Montessori's method. Meanwhile she worked hard to put through the translation of Madame Montessori's book *"Autoeducazione"*, and thus

make possible the utilisation of the method for children of school-age in Germany. In July, 1920, she was snatched away from her charges and the movement by her sudden death.

The first *public* attempt to introduce the pure Montessori-method was started in May of the year 1919, when the parish of Berlin-Lankwitz organised its local Kindergarten as a "Montessori Children's House". The conduct of the undertaking was entrusted to Elisabeth Schwarz and Elsa Ochs. There were also started shortly after in Berlin two private attempts to teach on Montessori lines. All three of these Montessori courses aroused, not only in Berlin but throughout the whole of Germany and far across its frontiers, the liveliest attention on the part of teachers and doctors. Later, however, when Lankwitz was linked on to the western suburb of Steglitz, the conservative School-board closed down the Children's House at Lankwitz and set up a Froebel-Kindergarten once more in its stead. Elisabeth Schwarz-Hierl left for Nuremberg, and opened a Children's House there under the auspices of the Municipality, in charge of which she remained until called to Jena to initiate a new Montessori-experiment there also. Here she worked in association with Elfriede Glückselig, who from June of the present year has been allowed officially to carry on the teaching of her pupils from the experimental preparatory course in a definitely recognized class under the regular municipal school system. The means for this course have been provided partly by the Jena University, which is taking great interest in the experiment.

Elsa Ochs took over the direction of the Montessori Children's House in Berlin-Wilmersdorf, founded by the two German Montessori Societies. The equipment of this centre was made possible by the kind help of Dutch friends of the movement, and for a long time we continued to receive their welcome contributions towards personal expenses, until the stabilisation of the German currency at last enabled us to maintain the undertaking from our own resources.

Maria Montessori has delivered two lectures in Germany on her method. The first was given at Easter, 1922, at Mayence,

under the auspices of the Conference of the "Bund entschiedener Schulreformer." The very deep impression made on all present is reflected in a report which was sent in by a teacher to the "Berliner Volkszeitung," which we reproduce here verbatim.

"Maria Montessori speaks:

"The third day's meeting of the Congress at Mayence, dealing with "The Making of Men and the Shaping of Life", takes us aloft to the peaks of farthest human vision. For the first time since the War, there has spoken in Germany the greatest pedagogue since the days of Rousseau and Pestalozzi: Dr. Maria Montessori of Rome. In her simple black dress, the stately matron with her silvering hair, stands before her hundred-headed closely-thronging audience, showing still, in flaming glance, in kindling speech and noble gesture the radiance of southern beauty and temperament. In an address, lasting an hour and a half, given in Italian and interpreted by her faithful pupil, Elsa Ochs, she sets forth the leading ideas of her educational method:

'God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him . . . on the basis of this eternal principle of human dignity she establishes the foundation of all education for the new era, which henceforth refuses to mould the soul of the child in the distorted image of man's imperfection. It is here a matter not of mere intellectual re-adjustment, but of complete change of spiritual outlook. The soul must become free of all dross, must stand pure, must "unbecome" as the German mystics put it, in order to serve Life. The teacher must lose his own life ere he can stand as servant of the budding Life of the child. All we may do is to help the child's own strength, its own *self-unfolding*, and this we must do by creating for it the appropriate environment.

'Not to compel to learn, but to let *live*, is the task of the school of the future. Maria Montessori pictures the arrangement of a true school of the child, she proclaims

the basic principle of such a school: No child shall possess aught of its own, no toy, no priority of place, all shall belong to each one. There is only one piece of each apparatus, the children must exchange with one another, must learn to consider others, learn to fit in with the rest. Life is their educator, not the teacher. All is accomplished thoroughly: the spontaneous unfolding of ordered activity. No teacher imposes the solution of any problem, the children seek activity freely for themselves. Work blossoms as the purest and most beautiful function of human life. Joyfully rooted in the soil of every practical work, human brotherliness ripens and the inner adjustment of the polar harmony in man. Let us leave to the child the tranquillity needed for the growth of self.

'For the fulfilment of this task of education a new generation of educators is required; in the words of the Bible: He that would be first among you, let him be the servant of all. Thus shall we develop not starkly-strong individuals isolated in egoism, but the individual ever in the circle of the community.

'Maria Montessori shows how in all lands, in Spain, in Italy, in Holland, in England, in Japan, in India, work is to-day being done in this spirit: lovable and innately noble is the German child, lovable and innately noble the child of every nation. No child of any nation is destined by the law of life to subjection or to servitude. Let us build together the brotherly Community of Man!'

"A storm of applause honoured this noble prophetess of true human dignity on the conclusion of her address."

In October, 1922, Maria Montessori spoke in the University at Berlin. Here again her words roused in all hearts the same deep response. In the daily press and in periodicals attention was directed to the high significance of the lecture, and the wish expressed that we might establish, also in Germany, and observe scientifically, experimental schools on Montessori lines. Representatives of the State ministries, school authorities and

scientific associations had been present at Dr. Montessori's lecture. The Minister for Science, Art and National Education gave a tea in honour of the famous visitor, with whom he had become personally acquainted in the course of her activities in Spain. Foreign ambassadors also paid her homage at a dinner given at the house of Baron van Nagell of the Dutch Embassy.

The proposition was made by Dr. Franz Hilker that a book should be published setting forth the experiences so far gathered in applying the Montessori system in Germany. This duly appeared in January 1923, published by Schwetschke & Son. It contained two contributions from Dottorressa Montessori herself, and three compositions by her German pupils.

The German exponents of the Montessori-method were afterwards invited to give lectures by the municipal authorities of a number of German towns, by various Teachers' Associations, and in one or two cases by the Parents' Councils of schools. These lectures, given usually with the accompaniment of abundant lantern-slide illustration, were the means of spreading fairly quickly a theoretical knowledge of the method throughout the greater part of Germany. They were given mainly in Berlin and its suburbs, and in various towns in the Mark of Brandenburg, further in a number of towns in Pomerania, Saxony and Silesia, in Frankfort-on-the-Main, in Nuremberg, Mayence, Cologne, Aix-la-Chapelle and several places in the Ruhr district. Many more invitations, too, have been received, and will dealt with gradually as occasion allows.

In November, 1919, a few Montessori-teachers constituted the "German Montessori Committee", which entered on its public activity by arranging lectures, writing articles for the press, and the publishing of a small brochure intended to help propaganda. It also initiated a "Montessori Conversational Circle", which is held by Elsa Ochs and Clara Grunwald at their home regularly once a week. The numerous letters from parents and teachers in all parts of Germany, and the large attendance at the Circle, indicate plainly how extensively the Montessori idea has already penetrated among all sections of the German

people. To the Circle come alike the cultured mother and the woman of the people, to receive advice on the upbringing of their children. Doctors send along parents with children who are difficult to manage. Often enough the Montessori Circle becomes practically a sort of professional consultation bureau, applied to alike by the daughter of some well-to-do father able to provide her with the means for a lengthy course of training, and by the intelligent working girl, keen to learn how she may place her strength and her love at the service of the rising generation.

The actual practical work accomplished in Germany does not, however, correspond to the publicity which the Montessori method now enjoys throughout the country, and the enthusiasm which it has roused. This is due partly to our general lack of means, which makes it difficult to provide for new classes, and partly to the inertia of our State official apparatus and the aversion of our school authorities to anything so radically new; partly also to the insufficiency of properly trained Montessori teachers.

To obviate this latter deficiency, the Montessori Committee resolved to organise a training-course, under the direction, approved of by Dottorressa Montessori, of her two pupils Elsa Ochs and Clara Grunwald. This course, intended for professional teachers, was held from the 11th of April to the 29th of September, 1923. It was given in the lecture hall of the "Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht", Berlin. The observational exercises were done in the mornings, and the practical exercises with the Montessori material and the musical-rhythmic exercises in the afternoon, at the Children's House in Berlin-Wilmersdorf. Twenty-two persons (all women) attended the course; school teachers, kindergarten teachers, one kindergarten mistress, a children's doctor, and one High-school teacher, and several mothers as occasional pupils. A number of further applications to join were sent in subsequently, especially from male teachers, which, however, could not be accepted owing to the course being already begun. Precautions are being taken to ensure that the next course

for the training of German teachers in the Montessori method, which it is planned to hold in the summer semester of 1925, shall be announced long enough beforehand to allow of applications coming in in good time. Our women pupils have for the most part started private "Children's Houses", some in Berlin, Dr. Käte Stern in Breslau and Dr. Emmy Bergmann, who later studied in Amsterdam under Dr. Montessori herself, will carry on a school in Freiburg Dr. Emmie Drexel, who also underwent further training with Dr. Montessori in Amsterdam, has since opened a Children's House at Hellerau near Dresden, with a special section for boarders.

As the German Montessori Committee, according to its statutes, may admit to membership only professional Montessori teachers, a daughter society was founded on the 15th of November, 1921, in order to unite for the common work all who wish to help to spread the Montessori method in Germany and to further the establishment and maintenance of Montessori Children's Houses. This "Gesellschaft der Freunde und Förderer der Montessori-Methode in Deutschland, E.V.", also published a propaganda pamphlet, setting forth the necessity of Children's Houses from a social point of view, and the special importance of the Montessori method for education for citizenship. The little pamphlet was in a very short time sold out. The Society works in close touch with the Montessori Committee. Both were associated in the founding of the Children's House at Berlin-Wilmersdorf, and both are responsible for the maintenance of the Children's House which was opened in April this year at the Leopoldplatz in the North of Berlin. For the moment both of the Children's Houses are run in the form of a half-day kindergarten; but we are making every effort to transform the Children's House at the Leopoldplatz, which is attended mainly by children of the working population, into a Day Home. Gradually, as our membership and with it our financial capacity increases, we shall open further Children's Houses, and later on school classes.

In a few weeks we shall be bringing out a new propaganda pamphlet in place of the one now out of print. It will contain

four separate articles. We are also being more and more frequently invited to contribute to educational periodicals. Dr. Emmy Bergmann has published two longish papers in the "Deutschen Lehrerzeitung," and the "Schlesischen Schulzeitung." The "Saarländer Schulzeitung" has issued a whole special Montessori Number, and the "Neue Erziehung" has also asked for articles. A number of publishers have invited us to publish books under their auspices. Several towns are only waiting for the teachers who are to be trained in our next training course to start Children's Houses. There is thus every prospect that the work in Germany will soon be able to progress more swiftly.

CLARA GRUNWALD.

The Montessori Home School, Rondebosch, S. Africa.

In the summer of 1916 Mrs. Leigh attended a course of "Lectures for Amateurs" on Educational Subjects, given in London by Miss Mildred Swannell and others. During these months Mrs. Leigh was a constant visitor at the St. Bartholomew's School in Gray's Inn Road, then, under the able direction of Miss Constance Marriott (Montessori Diploma, Rome 1914), being run by a Committee of philanthropically minded and educationally interested men and women, as an experimental school for the benefit of poor children. One result of these lectures and visits was that Mrs. Leigh persuaded Miss Marriott to come out to South Africa, and in October, 1916, the first Montessori School was started in this sub-continent.

Mrs. Leigh's parents, the Hon. Sir John and Lady Buchanan, kindly gave to the little school the use of two large rooms, a verandah and part of the garden of their delightful home, Clareinch, Claremont, during the first 15 months of its existence. In February 1918, with 20 pupils, the School took up its quarters in the half of a large old-fashioned house with a good garden at Rondebosch, an educational centre in the Cape Peninsula. Here the School gradually and steadily grew and became established, and at the beginning of last year, when Mrs. Leigh finally handed over to Miss Marriot all control of, and responsibility for, the school, it moved again, was re-organised, and is now known as "The Montessori Home School, Grove Road, Rondebosch, S.A.".

The School building is a large, double-storied house, standing in its own grounds, having a verandah, balcony and front garden facing beautiful Table Mountain, and a large back garden in which there are trees and gymnastic fences to climb, rose-covered arches and flower-beds to tend, and grass and

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sand to rest on and play in. The Home School comprises the Montessori Garden Day School of 40 pupils and the Children's Hostel (the first of its kind in South Africa), which can accommodate 20 children, from 2 years of age to 10 for boys and 12 for girls. At present there are 15 little boarders, to every one of whom this Montessori Home is an unspeakable boon. Most are little orphans; one has lost both parents. If the remaining parent is a father, he is only too thankful to have his little one under the continual loving care of well-educated gentlewomen, instead of having to leave it to the unwise, if tender, mercies of an irresponsible maid in boarding-house or hotel. If a mother has to support herself and child, she seldom finds it possible to secure sufficiently remunerative work under circumstances that allow her to keep her child with her. Being a "home" and not a "school", in the ordinarily accepted meaning of the word, there are no restrictions as to the number or times of visits that may be paid to the children by relatives or friends. These are especially encouraged to come and watch the children at work.

For the sake of "spreading the gospel", visitors are always welcomed; nearly 1,500 parents, guardians, teachers and young people intending one day to become such, have visited the school since its inception. The students from the Kindergarten Departments of the Government Training Colleges at Cape Town (5 miles distant), Wellington (30 miles distant) and Worcester (40 miles distant), pay annual visits to the school, which is also visited in a friendly way by Government inspectors and inspectresses, and by other members of the Education Department.

Mrs. Leigh and Miss Marriott believe that there have been several Montessori classes started in different schools in South Africa, but few have been maintained for any length of time, and at the moment of writing they are not in touch with any such. In the early days there was much strenuous opposition, due to mistaken prejudice, to be overcome; even now the Method is subjected to extraordinarily severe, and sometimes almost bitter, disapproval by many who have never taken the

trouble to visit a Montessori School or even to read a Montessori Book! On the other hand many now come to visit this school because their interest in the Method has been already aroused, and such always become interested and enthusiastic supporters. The transparent happiness and general well-being of the children and their unselfish, courteous behaviour to visitors and companions invariably call forth much pleased appreciation. It is not uncommon for the parents of a child who, through illness, enforced travelling, misunderstanding between itself and earlier teachers, or for any other reason, has grown antagonistic towards work or adult authority, or towards both — the combination is usual — to ask Miss Marriott to allow the child to come to the school just for one term, or for 6 months, or for a year, in order that so it may forget its prejudice, and re-discover the zest for work and the ready acceptance of recognised law and order, which are such outstanding characteristics of the true Montessori child.

Whenever it is possible to do so, Miss Marriott keeps trace of children who have left and gone to other schools. The reports are always satisfactory in those cases where the children had been "Montessorites" for any length of time. It is invariably found that they are the youngest, and also the leading, members of their respective forms, no matter how large such a class may be. When a child goes on to a school whose officials are not, as yet, in sympathy with the more modern educational practices, it is often placed in a form below its age-peers, but it is not left there. One boy left the M. H. S. at the end of 1922. During last year, at his new school, he was moved through four forms, and finally in December, 1923, was given a double remove. Miss Marriott does not anticipate that this will be the experience of other children who leave for the same school in the future, as she expects that hereafter they will be given at once work more suited to their capabilities.

Several outside teachers come to the school to give class lessons to the older children in such subjects as French, Dutch, Botany, Eurhythmics. It is always encouraging to hear what

these think of the "Montessori Children". The teachers enjoy these lessons, and are greatly struck by the pupils' strong powers of keen observation, their general knowledge and intelligence, their alertness of mind and body, and also by their refusal to accept dogmatic assertions regarding facts that are not self-evident and their determination to search out the underlying principles in whatever matter may be engrossing their attention.

Mrs. Leigh, who obtained Dr. Montessori's Certificate after attending the 1919 London Training Course, continues her work in and for the school, and there are always two young well-educated girls at a time at the school studying under Miss Marriott, who, after one or two years, according to private circumstances, take positions as children's nurses or governesses in private families, and thus help to solve the very difficult problem in South Africa of suitable help for over-burdened mothers and home-keepers. Miss Marriott and Mrs. Leigh strongly combat the prevailing local custom of employing inexperienced and ill-educated coloured and native women and girls as nurses and nursemaids to white children. They are constantly arranging lecturettes and demonstrations, especially during Child Welfare and Educational Conferences, and endeavour in other ways to stimulate public and private interest in the cause of children. There is a large general library at the school on the subject of children's upbringing; as well as several copies of the English translations of Dr. Montessori's own books, and these are constantly borrowed by people living all over South Africa — in the 4 different Provinces of the Union, in South-West Africa and in Rhodesia.

Holland — Amsterdam.

The Municipality of Amsterdam, which already possessed several Montessori Preparatory Classes last year, have resolved not merely to extend the number of preparatory classes, but also to form elementary classes on the Montessori basis. The first class has now commenced working in one of the Municipal Schools. Thus it is now possible for children who cannot attend the private Montessori Schools to obtain full instruction by the Montessori method at the Municipal schools (3—12 years).

The Twelfth International Training Course

by

Dr M. MONTESSORI.

The Twelfth International Training Course on Child Education by Dr. Montessori will be held in London from April 1st. till end of July, 1925, and will be conducted by Dr. Maria Montessori: it will consist of about 50 hours Lectures on Theory, 50 hours practice work, and 50 hours observation and individual work. There will be an opportunity for students to practise with the Material in the afternoons. Classes will be held in Handwork, Drawing and Painting, if possible.

Intending students should immediately apply to the Hon. Director, Mr. C. A. Bang, O. B. E., 45, Dover Street, London, W. 1. for prospectus and application form.

Dr. M. Montessori honoured at Rome.

"Il Messaggero" of 14th. June contains the following account of the reception given to Dr. M. Montessori on the occasion of her receiving the degree of Doc. Hon. Causa:

The Committee of the Montessori Society held a Reception the day before yesterday at the villa of the Marchioness Maraine Guerrieri Gonzaga to do honour to Dr. Montessori on her return from her triumphs in England where the degree of Doc. Hon. Causa had been conferred upon her by the University of Durham.

The Queen-Mother, who is Patroness of the Society, sent a portrait of herself with her signature, accompanied by a telegram of congratulation, and similar telegrams were received from the Rector Magnificus, Senator Pestalozza, Prof. Caromia, Senator Artom and Prof. Alessandrini. His Excellency Signor Mussolini was represented by Comm. Trabalza, and Senator Cremonesi by Comm. Laurenti, while the Reception was further attended by Minister Gentile, Mrs. Bettolini, Senator Count Taina and others.

Minister Gentile, speaking as a scholar and representative of the Government, expressed his great admiration for Dr. Montessori's work which aims at emancipating the child's soul, with its guileless and spontaneous creative faculties, from the direct influence of the teacher.

The Minister regretted that, in contrast with what has already been accomplished in other countries, so little has been done in Italy, and he expressed himself as confident that the Government will see its way to do far more in future in behalf of the Montessori Method.

Dr. Montessori, in thanking Minister Gentile, referred to the interest he had shown in the Method long before he occupied

his present high position; she further pointed out that it is the children themselves who have demonstrated the usefulness of the new Method and gained followers for it all over the world.

The assembled company were enabled to view the vast amount of international literature already published on the ideas of Dr. Montessori, and to admire the large collection of photographs gathered from all parts of the world, as well as a quantity of work, some most ingenious, done by children of very tender years.

Letteratura.

Il Delicato Amore Di San Francesco Per La Natura.

San Francesco, il gran bambino di Dio, manifestava cogli atti piú fini e delicati la gran potenza del suo amore verso tutte le cose.

Egli era commosso dalla purezza e freschezza dell'acqua — e quando si lavava le mani, cercava che non ne cadesse in terra neppure una goccia; oppure si recava a lavarsi in qualche luogo dove le gocce cadute non potessero essere calpestate, ma andassero a dissetare il terreno fertile. — Sulle pietre e sulle rocce metteva il piede con precauzione pensando che erano una creazione di Dio. Quando un frate tagliava la legna nel bosco, lo pregrava di conservare in ciascun albero abbastanza perché continuasse a vivere e a rinverdire. Comandava all'ortolano di preparare anche un'aiuola per i fiori, dove questi potessero crescere ben dritti.

Il fuoco aveva ai suoi occhi tanta bellezza, che mai vedeva volentieri spegnere un cero o smorzare una lampada. Voleva che nei prati si gettassero semi di erbe odorose il cui profumo salisse a Dio come un ringraziamento. Lo si vedeva fermarsi e chinarsi amorosamente sui nidi ove erano nati i piccoletti del „fratello pettirosso” — e imbastire di sua propria mano i nidi per le tortorelle. Quando vedeva per la strada dei vermi che si contorcevano, e rischiavano da un momento all'altro di essere schiacciati, premurosamente li prendeva e metteva da parte, perché non fossero calpestati: e nell'inverno non mancava mai di portare del miele negli alveari delle api. E gli sembrava che tutte le cose cantassero lodi a Dio; — nella sinfonia della creazione nessuna nota è dimenticata: tutti, dal cherubino all'atomo, cantano concordi il cantico della lode.

(Tratto dall'opera di Giovanni Joergensen:
„SAN FRANCESCO D'ASSISI”).

Letteratura

St. Francis & His Love of Nature.

St. Francis, the great child of God, manifested by many tactful and delicate actions the great power of his love towards all creation.

He was so moved by the purity and freshness of water that when he washed his hands he endeavoured not to let a drop fall to the ground; or he would wash in some spot where the fallen drops would not be wasted, but moisten the fertile soil. He stepped with heed upon stones and rocks remembering that they were created by God. If a brother were hewing wood, he would pray him to leave enough living branches that the tree might continue to live and flourish. He bade the gardener keep among the vegetables a bed for flowers where they might grow according to their nature and habit.

Fire was in his eyes so fair that he never liked to see a candle or a lamp extinguished. He desired that the seeds of scented flowers should be sown broadcast in the meadows, that their perfume should rise to God like a hymn of thanks. He might be seen bending lovingly over the nest containing the nestlings of little Brother Redbreast, and weaving with his own hands nests for the doves. If he saw in the road a worm in danger of being trodden on, he would take it and put it on one side, that it might not be crushed underfoot, and in the winter he never failed to carry honey to the hives of the bees.

It appeared to him that all things sang praises to God; that in the symphony of creation no note was forgotten; that all beings, from the cherubim to the atom, sang together a hymn of praise.

(From the work of Joergensen "St. Francis of Assisi").

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THE CALL OF EDUCATION

Edited by Dr MARIA MONTESSORI

with the Co-operation of

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APRIL 1st. TILL END OF JULY 1925.

DR. MARIA MONTESSORI herself will give a series of lectures on the theory of her system, and will also, with the help of her assistants, give practical demonstrations in the use of the Material.

VISITS to recognised Montessori Schools in London for the purpose of observation will be organised.

CLASSES in Handwork, Drawing and Painting will, if possible, also be held.

THE COURSE WILL CONSIST OF about 50 hours lectures on the Theory of her Method, personally given by Dr. Montessori (Afternoons). About 50 hours of practice work with Material by students under the supervision of Dr. Montessori or her assistants (Mornings). About 50 hours of observation and individual work (Mornings and Afternoons).

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